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HOW TO TALK

MEETING THE SITUATIONS OF PERSONAL AND
BUSINESS LIFE AND OF PUBLIC ADDRESS

By

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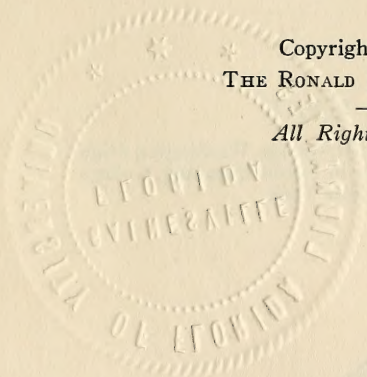
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PREFACE

There is probably no one who does not tell himself privately, now and then, that he has come short of shining success in some interview, some speech to a group, even in handling some small "situation" within his own household. Where can one go for help with these very personal problems?

What is required, particularly on the part of the man or woman who has been concerned with doing things rather than with talking about them, would seem to be neither an elaborate survey of formal usage nor yet a discussion of the fine points of an expert's play—the preparation of elaborate addresses, or the mysteries of "high-pressure salesmanship"—but a plain account of how to make the best use of resources which we all possess in situations which we all experience.

That is, substantially, what this book offers. It seeks to show the reader how to make an analysis of the conditions of the type of public address in which practically everyone today has to participate, and of conversation as well; to give him a clear statement of what is expected of him, according to current standards of good form; and to suggest practical methods for improving his "technique," at a minimum cost in effort and time. The chapters are the outgrowth of many years' experience in helping individuals to work out their own problems of communication—students in school and college, salesmen, executives in different lines of business and professional activity, women's clubs, social and fraternal organizations.

Good talking is the result of sound thought and energetic purpose utilizing the principles of clear and tactful statement to meet the situation of the moment. All of us talk well now and then, when we are at our best. What we need is to bring

our average closer to our best. There is no magic formula by which the indolent or careless may outstrip the thoughtful and resolute, or by which the novice may be given in a day the wisdom of experience. But it is possible for anyone, through utilizing everyday opportunities, to build up a habit of manly, clear, and pleasing presentation of one's ideas, whatever the occasion.

Improvement seems to depend primarily upon proper analysis of a situation. While there are very definite rules for good form in speech, they have to be applied differently according to the relations of the persons engaged. The discussion in this book, therefore, proceeds by studying the chief occasions for talk that arise in our business or professional life as well as in our relations with family and intimates, with fraternal and social groups, perhaps with the general public, and noting the modifications of form and procedure which each one involves. This survey is followed by practical suggestions with respect to particular points of technique.

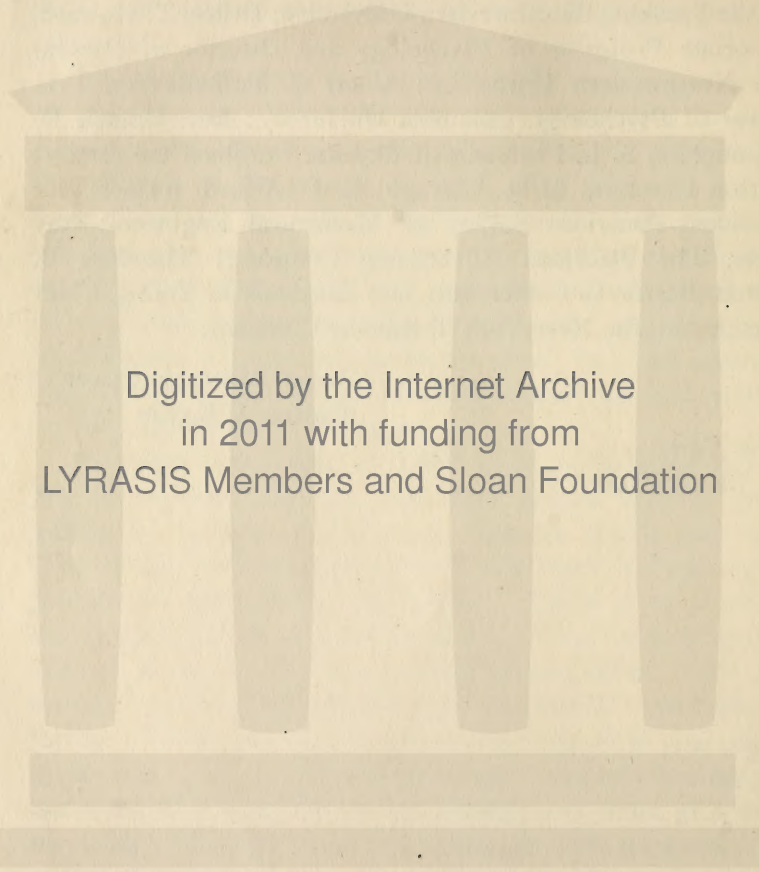
Developing command of speech is an undertaking that is full of interest. For like any other normal activity, good talking is enjoyable, exhilarating. Labored talk is poor talk. The men and women who talk well—not much, but well—give pleasure to others and to themselves. There is no working tool so powerful as real skill in speech. There is nothing that does so much to make one a welcome companion. And for oneself, beyond question, there is no pleasure so varied and so lasting. When you have begun to discover how your mind works when you try to influence, direct, comfort other people, and what they mean by their responses, you never give over the study, for every word you exchange with some one else carries you along.

During the many years in which this book has been growing, suggestions and help have been received from literally hundreds of men and women in many walks of life, for which

only a general acknowledgment can here be made. Special acknowledgment is due, however, to the following, who have been good enough to look over the manuscript from various points of view: Norris A. Brisco, Dean of the School of Retailing, New York University; C. D. Hardy, Professor of Public Speaking, Northwestern University; Delton T. Howard, Associate Professor of Psychology and Director of Personnel, Northwestern University; Albert C. Poffenberger, Professor of Psychology, Columbia University; Rev. Francis D. O'Loughlin, S. J., Professor of Physics, Fordham University; Burton Haseltine, M.D., Chicago; L. P. Alford, former Vice President American Society of Mechanical Engineers; Ray Giles, The Blackman Advertising Company; Theodore B. Hilton, Barron G. Collier, Inc., and Benjamin F. Young, Chief Accountant, the New York Telephone Company.

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HOW TO TALK

PART I

THE PROBLEM

Speak properly and in as few words as you can, but always plainly; for the end of speech is not ostentation but to be understood.—WILLIAM PENN: The Fruits of Solitude.



CHAPTER I

WHY STUDY THIS SUBJECT?

The Power of Communication.—How many of us realize the full import in our lives of the power of speech, of communicating ideas to other people by means of language? Each human individual, by nature, lives in a world of his own. The transmission of thought from one mind to another is the basis of civilization; it is the most important human activity, after those of mere subsistence. And without command of a common medium of transmission, definite yet flexible, such as speech, we should be virtually helpless. We could not pass along our feelings and purposes to those with whom we must live and work; we could not discover theirs. We could not tap the recorded knowledge of the race; there would be none to tap. Nor would our own thinking have any fullness or reliability.

It is the purpose of this book to help the reader to use language so as to convey his thoughts to others with greater accuracy and effectiveness, whenever he talks.

Our Lifelong Study of Language.—From infancy onward we have all been studying language, whether we realize the fact or not, in our work and in our play. A very large portion of our school years was given to its formal study. In the United States today about one-fourth of the entire sum raised by taxes, national, state, and municipal, is spent on the schools, and it is a significant fact that nearly a third of this vast amount goes toward training the future citizen in the use of language. To the grown man or woman, as a result, command of the mother tongue sufficient it might seem for the occasions of life, has come to be virtually instinctive.

Sometimes, Misunderstanding.—Yet while we feel little difficulty most of the time in telling others what we think and what we want, and in grasping the sense of what they say in return, even though they stumble or hesitate, sometimes we fail. Sometimes we find ourselves against a blank wall of misunderstanding. Everyone knows the panicky feeling that comes at such a time, of the utter inadequacy of our command of language.

Is it only on occasions of vital importance that this feeling comes upon us? May it not come at any time and on all sorts of occasions? Not only to the young clerk reporting to his employer but equally to the employer trying to make his instructions clear to the clerk; not only to the child trying to tell his troubles to parent or teacher but to the child's mother in her dealings with tradespeople, "help," or husband; to the scientist explaining a technical principle to a layman; to the statesman seeking to rouse the public in an emergency. What child of Adam—and Eve—is not moved at times to the exasperated cry, perhaps on an occasion the most intimate and in itself most trivial: "Why can't you understand?" Or perhaps to the other cry: "What *is* it you're trying to say?"

Testimony from the Public.—No one need think he is peculiar in such a feeling. The instrument of language—marvelously effective and the only means we have, anyway, to bridge the gap between our own minds and others—is a "tricky" instrument. It may at any moment get us unexpectedly into trouble if we fail to watch our step.

Recently a rather careful investigation was made of this matter. A large number of people in responsible positions were induced to report their own actual experiences with respect to "getting their ideas across"—the colloquial phrase exactly expresses the thought—day in and day out. Reports came in from men and women in over 200 occupations, in all degrees of eminence; from young and old, from those who were highly educated

and those of little schooling. Some of the confessions are surprising.

"I find it difficult to be concise . . . to forego the temptation to include unnecessary detail . . . to get to the main point without delay."

"I am guilty of using technical terms which others fail to comprehend, though looking wise."

"I have difficulty in asking for the particular information I desire without seeming abrupt and almost rude. . . . At times I find myself unable to express myself concisely without the appearance of undue brusqueness."¹

That last complaint, for instance, came in almost identical words from a merchant in a little eastern town, a southern judge, a northern banker, a New England physician, and an educational director in an eastern industrial city.

All in Need of Help.—These people did not know very clearly what the matter was. Many said things like this: "There's nothing wrong with my language at all—the trouble is only that I get so excited and say what I don't mean." But all agreed that the use of language to convey ideas to other people accurately and readily was a vitally important factor in their business and social affairs, and that their clumsiness often meant delay, friction, and waste. Particularly they admitted that when they had an important or delicate situation to handle, their usual command of speech somehow was not adequate.

Would it not seem that the nature and conditions of communication as you have to engage in it are worth looking into with some care? Why go through life handicapped with respect to a recurrent responsibility?

A Technique of Communication.—What is the cause, at bottom, for our failure at times to function satisfactorily? Is it not our failure to recognize the existence of a definite *technique of communication of thought*, distinct from the technique of thinking?

¹ Report on The Place of English in American Life, National Council of Teachers of English, 6705 Yale Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

An immense amount of trouble has been caused by hoary half-truths, such as: "If you really *know* a thing you can tell it," "Poor talk is merely the result of poor thinking," and so on. In your own experience you have plenty of instances to the contrary. Often you find yourself utterly unable to convey to another person a conception which to you is perfectly clear. It may be an intricate idea or it may be merely a vague feeling, but in either case you know perfectly what is in your mind and yet you cannot make it clear to the other fellow. The reason is that you know that matter only from the inside. You have not thought of how to present it to another mind.

The activity of speech is so intimate that it is apt to elude our conscious attention. On most occasions our attention is wholly deflected from the *how* of our speech to the *what*. When there is misunderstanding the chances are that the trouble is with the process, and a little attention to that will simplify things wonderfully.

Some Have Learned It.—As a matter of fact, there are individuals in every circle of society who succeed notably in their dealings with other people, so much so that they are highly regarded for their clear and sound thinking. We all admire a person who, as we say, has a clean-cut positive personality, who can meet a situation squarely and see the way through. Most people are willing to go to some trouble to develop such a personality for themselves. Now is it always the fact, when a man displays what we call constructive thinking, or power of leadership, that his thoughts are so much better than those of his associates? May it not be rather that he is more careful about how he expresses his thought?

Outstanding Examples.—Investigation always shows that the people who succeed notably in their communication of ideas have applied themselves in just this way to the systematic improvement of their powers. Elihu Root, the foremost lawyer of

his time, a polished man of the world, a diplomat of international repute, has been a lifelong student of all aspects of the science and art of speech. Governor Alfred E. Smith, a man of the people, of limited schooling but of broad and careful education, an expert in government, has developed his exceptional power of reaching the mind and the heart of the common man through long years of concentrated effort.

Consider Dr. S. Parkes Cadman of Brooklyn, a liaison officer of the "Fifth Estate," commanding the attention and stimulating the thinking of a vast radio audience week after week. Or Father Francis P. Duffy, sometime professor of theology in a Catholic seminary, then chaplain of the Fighting Sixty-Ninth in the World War, now rector of a New York parish. Or Charles M. Schwab, hardly more famed as a captain of industry than for his power of making ideas plain to other people alike in public speech and in conversation. To assume that they were merely gifted by nature with a peculiar genius for talking is to disregard the facts of record.

How Lincoln Did It.—From his early youth Abraham Lincoln took assiduous pains to master the powers of language. Some commentators go so far as to say that he owed his political eminence to his "unremitting effort to use his mother tongue skillfully and persuasively." There is at least one remark of his own on the matter that has been carefully recorded. After the Cooper Union Address in 1860, Lincoln left New York in company with an elderly acquaintance who asked him this question, "I want very much to know how you got this unusual power of 'putting things.' It must have been a matter of education. No man has it by nature alone. What has your education been?" Lincoln answered:

Well, as to education, the newspapers are correct. I never went to school more than six months of my life. But, as you say, this must be a product of culture in some form. I have been putting the question you ask me to myself while you have been talking. I say this: that among my earliest recollections, I remember now when a mere child, I

used to get irritated when anybody talked to me in a way I could not understand. I don't think I ever got angry at anything else in my life. But that always disturbed my temper and has ever since. I can remember going to my little bedroom, after hearing the neighbors talk of an evening, with my father, and spending no small part of the night walking up and down and trying to make out the exact meaning of some of their, to me, dark sayings. I could not sleep, though I often tried to, when I got in such a hunt after an idea, until I caught it; and when I thought I had got it, I was not satisfied until I had repeated it over and over, until I had put it in language plain enough, as I thought, for any boy I knew to comprehend. This was a kind of passion with me, and it has stuck by me; for I am never easy now, when I am handling a thought, till I have bounded it north and bounded it south, and bounded it east and bounded it west. Perhaps that accounts for the characteristics you observe in my speeches, though I never put the two things together before.

Studying Your Own Case.—Instances of similar mastery of the technique of communication, though on a smaller stage, are to be found in every community, in almost every group. The federal judge who said, in reply to the inquiry referred to above: "I should have to confess to difficulty at every point," has a record of distinguished success in the very activities which he recognizes as difficult.

What is required, if you would follow in the steps of these men and others like them, is merely that you learn to give attention, as they have done, to the responsibilities and possibilities of daily life, the little things as well as the big ones. It is a practical and personal undertaking which calls for cool judgment, patient analysis and experiment, and which inevitably brings its reward. Suppose you look into the communication which is required of yourself and of the people around you in the varying contacts of daily life. See where you and the others do really well and where the record is less satisfactory, and try to determine the reasons. See how the good points in your present practice can be further developed, and in what points you need help. The language scholars, the psychologists, the advertising people, and men in

various other lines of work have found out much that will help you in such a study.

"The Science of the Distribution of Ideas."—You will find that there is a definite technique of transmission of thought, which has been worked out in the course of ages of human living, and which is followed more or less consciously and with more or less completeness in all successful contacts. You will be able to trace the working of this technique in the everyday procedures of yourself and of those about you. You will find, indeed, that you are building up for guidance in your own work a knowledge of one of the oldest of the sciences, the "science of the distribution of ideas," as Professor Fred Newton Scott of the University of Michigan has called it—the science of Rhetoric. Rhetoric, as you will discover in your own case, is not just a thing of the schoolroom, but as much a part of life as Chemistry is. This book applies that basic science to the problems of contact today. You will discover that it can be utilized to immediate advantage in every relation of life—in your profession or business, at home, in social contacts, as well as on formal public occasions.

The study of this subject opens possibilities of better understanding other people, of controlling and developing your own thought more effectively, of influencing others more surely. It will add significance to your every contact and bring about fuller personal satisfaction.

CHAPTER II

THE FATAL ERROR OF TALKING TO YOURSELF

Exchange of Thought a Complex Activity.—When we come short of maximum effectiveness in communication, whether it be in telling others what we mean or in grasping what others say, the difficulty at bottom is one of mental attitude. We are engaged in a process which we suppose to be simple and largely automatic but which is actually a highly complex affair. Full success in it depends upon utilizing what might be called “control points.”

There are two main difficulties, which it is well to face squarely at the outset. In the first place, the physical mechanism involved in talking is more elaborate and delicate than any of the great machines. Swift and accurate adjustments are required at every step, on the part of speaker and listener. While we can obtain a telephone or radio instrument which is already “tuned” for maximum efficiency in the uses for which it is employed, each one has to tune for himself his personal communication apparatus. No third person can solve for me the problems involved in conveying my thought to your mind. No outsider can solve for you the problems that are inherent in your grasping of the thought I undertake to convey. In the second place, the medium all must use, the marvelous code of signals known as language, is full of inconsistencies for which we must ever be on the alert. If we are less than vigilant, we may fail to realize how perplexing this medium can be.

The Secret—Utilizing Controls.—On the other hand, the principles of successful communication are not hard to understand or to observe, if we will resolutely give attention to them. And our personal apparatus is fashioned with a surprising sensitive-

ness and reliability; we need only learn not to misuse it. Moreover, while any attempt to give conscious attention to every detail of the complicated procedure would be futile, there are unquestionably definite control points. By concentrating upon these we can direct the whole process. This is the most important fact of the situation. Our problem is, how to make ourselves pay attention to a matter which has been largely automatic all our lives, so as to discover and make use of these controls.

Where the Difficulties Lie.—In the transmission of an idea from one mind to another by means of speech there are four factors:

- The thought itself, the message;
- The speaker and his personality and attitude;
- The listener and *his* personality and attitude;
- The medium by which the message is conveyed, that is to say, the words and their arrangement and delivery.

If you do not know what you want to say; if you chance to be preoccupied or careless; if the language you use is ambiguous or incomplete or your utterance is indistinct; or if I happen to be inattentive and the form of the message is not attractive enough to compel my attention—why, your message does not get through, does it?

Now the thought itself, the message, is actually the least troublesome of these factors, though it is the one upon which attention is commonly centered. We are well aware, most of the time, of our *purpose* when we address someone else.

The real difficulties arise in connection with the other factors. Some develop from the personalities and relationship of the persons concerned—the “pitcher” and the “catcher.” Some result from the nature of the medium of language. At bottom both types of difficulty are psychological. Questions of form: of fluency, of beauty, even of technical “correctness,” are only secondary in the problem of effective transmission of thought.

Speaker and Listener.—As each individual differs somewhat in nature and background from every other, each has a slightly different point of view and a different perspective in his thinking. When *you* undertake to convey an idea to *me*, you have to consider whether the idea as it lies in your mind is likely to appear intelligible and reasonable to *me*. If I am to grasp it fully and readily, it must be presented from a point of view that seems natural to *me*. For the time being you have to think in the manner in which I think. Are we not, all of us, prone to forget to make this allowance for differences between individuals? Do we allow also for special conditions which may interfere just then with the other man's attention or interest? Is not this the reason why our presentation so often goes "over the head" of the person addressed?

Moreover, is it not only too true that when *I* talk to *you* I make allowance for my slips in accuracy, my failures of manner, whereas, when *you* talk to *me*, I instinctively hold you to the letter of what you say? If your statement is not readily and fully intelligible my instinct is to think you either stupid or foolish, or to think you are trying to deceive.

The Heart of the Difficulty.—This unfortunate perversity of attitude, rooted deep in human nature, causes endless trouble in communication. Yet it is the effect not of "cussedness" but of self-centered-ness, of preoccupation with our own point of view. When we have to deal with someone who is *obviously* different from ourselves, especially if he is in some way defective or helpless, we exert ourselves to meet him on his own ground; we make allowance for his differing point of view. With little children, with people who are sick or in manifest trouble, we choose with care what to say and we make allowance for what *they* say, just as we soften our voices in a sickroom, and we are careful to do these things without giving notice by the slightest sign that we are making special concessions. If we could develop and main-

tain the habit of doing just that with everybody, we should be a long way toward success in all our communication.

A Japanese gentleman recently took up his residence in New York on business. Recognizing that he spoke English very brokenly, he took lessons from a tutor and very nearly got rid of his foreign accent. After a while, though, he resumed his accent except with intimates. He discovered, he said, that he received much more attention and consideration when speaking with an accent, as a foreigner and presumably at a disadvantage. His experience confirms the whimsically keen advice lately incorporated by George Bernard Shaw—it is reported—in a series of phonograph records recently made in England for the benefit of students of correct English:

Speak with a strong foreign accent and speak broken English. Then every English person to whom you are talking will at once know that you are a foreigner and try to understand you and be ready to help you.

Put Your Mind on the Other Man.—The whole doctrine might be summed up in the phrase: “Put your mind on the other man.” Consideration of the other fellow is essential in all talk, first, last, and all the time. You cannot safely take for granted that he will agree with what you say, that he will understand, or even hear you distinctly. Unless you aim every statement at him, as you aim a ball when you throw it, you are not really talking—you are delivering a monologue. This simple fact is almost always overlooked. While we always assume that we are directing our talk to the person or group we are addressing, actually we do that very imperfectly. Too often when we suppose we are directing our remarks to someone else, we are only thinking aloud, talking to ourselves.

Is this assertion too strong? Try to keep tab tomorrow upon your conversations. See in how many of them you are actually adapting your message to the capacity and mood of the other person, and in how many you are thinking mainly of your own thought, and making your listener trail after you to get it. In

the series of phonograph records just mentioned, Bernard Shaw is reported as saying, also :

As a public speaker, I have to take care that every word I say is heard distinctly at the far end of large halls containing thousands of people ; but at home, when I have to consider only my wife sitting within six feet of me at breakfast, I take so little pains with my speech that often, instead of giving me the expected answer, she says : "Don't mumble, and don't turn your head away when you speak. I can't hear a word you are saying."

Mr. Shaw's plays, stories, and articles show in every sentence his unremitting concern with this very matter of how things may be presented so as to catch and hold attention. Yet even he, it appears, sometimes just thinks aloud.

The Fatal Error of "Thinking Aloud."—Thinking aloud takes various forms. Sometimes, when alone and absorbed in a problem, we catch ourselves uttering broken phrases or disconnected words. Occasionally, perhaps, when puzzled about a matter, we go further and soliloquize ; that is, we make a more or less deliberate effort to put our ideas on the subject into connected words—a little speech addressed to ourselves. Now is it not the fact that most of us often do virtually the same thing, without intending to do it, in the presence of a listener or group of listeners ? Is it not a fact that much of what passes for conversation or public speaking is little more than such soliloquizing ? At such a time the speaker is making no real effort to adapt his thought to the individuals he supposes he is addressing ; he is not in truth thinking of them at all but merely running over the contents of his own mind. Their physical presence serves only to aid him somewhat in keeping the thread of his own thought.

The babble of children, the garrulity of old people whose mental grip has weakened, are extreme instances of this sort of thinking aloud in the presence of a listener. But all of us are more prone to it than we realize. Our grandfathers had many a laugh over a little volume by Douglas Jerrold, an English humorist

of eighty years back, entitled "Mrs. Caudle's Curtain Lectures," which reported the harangues addressed by an Early Victorian wife to her husband, after they had "retired for the night." One may hazard a guess that the race of Mrs. Caudle is not yet extinct even in these days of model bungalows, and that indignant questions like her "Caudle, are you listening?", "Caudle, are you awake?", are still to be heard in the land.

And what about Caudle himself? If he is an instructor of youth, and some sly student asks a question cunningly, Professor Caudle may spend the rest of the hour riding his pet hobby—soliloquizing. If he is a business executive, he may do the very same thing under the delusion that he is giving needed instructions to a subordinate.

In Public Speaking, Also.—In public speaking, thinking aloud often produces a discourse that is logical, coherent, even beautiful—a long prose lyric—only it is not communication, not a message directed to listeners. A prominent New York clergyman was invited to address the men's club of a suburban church at its annual dinner. When introduced, he rose, fixed his eye on a point in the ceiling, and proceeded to think aloud for an hour and ten minutes about his recent travels in the West and some reflections they had inspired in him. It was a well-worded statement of his own thought, but there was no indication of any effort to adapt it to that occasion. It might have been given with equal appropriateness to a thousand audiences, which means that it was not real communication for any audience.

The prevalence of this sort of thing is the main reason why public speakers overrun their time. Absorbed in tracing the course of their own thought, very naturally they lose count of the minutes. In a good-sized city, the Parent-Teacher Association of a grade school had arranged a discussion of certain features of the new course of study, and invited the supervisor of elementary grades to open the discussion with a ten-minute talk. The supervisor, a mature and determined lady, began, "The time assigned

me, ten minutes, would appear to be short, but I *know* my subject and therefore I shall be able to cover it for you in that time," and then proceeded to talk for forty-five minutes, regardless of the timid efforts of the chairman to interrupt her.

Aim Your Talk.—Public speakers who have to get results from their addresses—the veteran jury lawyer, the labor organizer, the soap-boxer—learn to adapt every remark to the particular group of listeners before them. If you want people to get your message, apply that principle, whatever the circumstances. Do not open your mouth until you have something to say; then try to direct your thought to the listener in the way which will best reach *him*—not somebody else but *him*. Do not brood over your idea while speaking; trust your brain to feed in the proper images and words as you need them. Fix your attention upon the target.

Here is the opportunity for the shy, thoughtful, earnest man. Usually the people who *do* "talk well," who succeed in getting other people to understand them, are what the phrase of the day calls "extraverts," the frank, objective people who plunge ahead on impulse. The man who is shy or reserved holds back because he is afraid—not afraid of the other man, but afraid of his *own standards*, fearful of doing the wrong thing, of being silly or untactful. But when this thoughtful, shy man once learns to put his mind on the listener, he will very probably excel the impulsive chap, because he can think better. His trouble is that he has been turning his mind inward upon himself—he has let himself become an "intravert"—instead of outward upon the people he must influence. Some time or other in the past, perhaps, he made the wrong move and was misunderstood or snubbed, so that it hurt. As a result he "closed up" and now does not try to explain himself to others.

When you have learned to think in terms of other people you discover that lack of appreciation, surliness, dislike spring very often from misunderstanding. If you know the right approach you can say practically what you please, to anybody.

Technique of Language.—Consider now, in this connection, the nature of language. Your thoughts—and my thoughts—lie within our minds. We see them from the inside; we take them for granted. Very few of them have been analyzed or given distinct form. Before they can be grasped by another person they must be given definite shape, must be arranged and spun off into a series of signals, addressed to ear and eye. From these the other person must retranslate them into his own consciousness. Our power of intercommunication is limited by our success in handling the signals.

The code of signals which we call our language is a highly elaborate affair. It is composed primarily of thousands of standardized blocks of sound known as words, each of them representing an idea or a relation between ideas, but the words taken by themselves constitute only a part of the code. To form intelligible messages they have to be grouped or arranged in what we call sentences and paragraphs, according to a variety of recognized patterns developed by custom. For the significance of the groups to be fully grasped, moreover, the sounds have to be uttered with a certain degree of precision and according to certain customs of intonation, and accompanied by appropriate “eye-signals” in the shape of looks and gestures.

All these factors: words, grouping, enunciation, quality of voice, physical expression, come into play whenever we speak. The technique of this management and combination in even the most informal talk is a most profitable and necessary study.

There is the matter of the force of individual words. Such terms as *victory*, *shipwreck*, *baseball*, stir the attention of almost anyone, and for each individual there are other words which have a special potency, which bring him to attention when they strike his ear. There is the power that lies in cunning arrangement or grouping of words, shown in the telling phrases of poets and orators and in the slogans of advertising copy. There is the contribution, even greater and more immediate, made by the right adjustment of the voice. Words that look commonplace in written

form take on vividness when rightly uttered. When the telephone rings and we hear the voice of a friend a thousand miles away, we get far more than the explicit information contained in the sentences he utters; the word-groups are rich with the significance and color of his voice; they have the individual character that is the result of his habits of enunciation and intonation. Finally, there is the factor of physical expression, most subtle and influential of all, though by most of us less consciously analyzed than the other factors of speech technique. In all ages able men have devoted long hours, year after year, to mastery of the technique of language as a means of increasing their skill in discussion or negotiation. You will find the effort put into such study as directly profitable as any expert's study of the tools of his trade.

Language as Related to the Occasion.—But the point of view of your study of language technique is all-important. We are prone to regard our own language code, our "mother tongue," as something having almost an independent existence, something that is fixed and unvarying, a set of formulas that may be applied anywhere without change, like the multiplication table. We tend to think of words, sentences, and other features of the language code as "good" or "bad," "correct" or "improper" in and of themselves, regardless of the circumstances in which they are to be used or the persons to whom they are to be addressed. Now this is a grave misconception, which is responsible for much of our trouble in using language. The truth is that this mother tongue of ours—and every language—is merely an elaborate and inconsistent set of customs. It is a composite inheritance from the more or less careless practices of multitudes of widely varying individuals in former ages, and it is constantly shifting in little points as the years pass. Hence it is full of minute differences of usage, not only as between one word and another but as between one individual and another, points that are not noted in any dictionary definitions. If you are a "dry" and your next-door neighbor a "wet," the same word or phrase may in his mind stand for

something that is highly desirable and in your mind for something that is hateful.

For the purposes of actual communication, the language resources which each one of us has at his command amount only to this, the stock of words and expressive devices which is familiar to the individual—or the group—that we address at the moment. The heart of our problem in using language is that of making the most of this stock, selecting the signals which will on the whole convey our ideas to this individual or group most fully and agreeably. For the “other man” is not likely to be waiting at the door for our message; we have to attract and retain his attention.

Combining Book Study and Study of Life.—Accordingly, study of the technique of language calls for study of words and other features not merely as they are described in dictionary or grammar, but also as they are related to the situations of life about you. It stands to reason that the more you know of what books have to tell about the history and forms of language, the better you are likely to recognize and respond to the language characteristics of the individual in front of you. We may well marvel at the great scholar who can converse fluently and correctly with the representatives of a dozen races in quick succession, shifting easily to the mother tongue of each one in turn. But is it not equally essential, for real mastery of language, to observe and compare the personal peculiarities of usage and manner of the groups and individuals you meet in the day? May we not marvel equally at the veteran traveling man, politician, or hotel clerk, as he adapts his words and grouping, his utterance and expression to a rapidly changing series of individual types within the one community?

It is possible to combine book study and study of life; if rightly guided they reinforce each other. They will help you to get free from the great difficulty in the use of language, namely: the temptation to use it perfunctorily. You will no longer be

content to word your thoughts in terms that satisfy yourself and conform to "accepted rules." You will be more likely to meet each situation on its merits, adjusting the highly flexible instrument of language, for each contact, to the limitations of the person to whom you speak.

Thus the hindrances to effective transmission of thought arising from language are at bottom psychological, like those of the speaker and listener relationship. The sure way to get rid of them is to remember to talk the language of the other man, be concerned for his understanding, and never "talk to yourself."

CHAPTER III

HOW TO STUDY THE SUBJECT

A Study for the Mature Mind.—The study of communication is peculiarly an affair of adult life and mature powers of mind. For it is a matter of learning to adjust yourself in actual contacts, and most of the contacts that offer difficulty grow out of the relationships of maturity.

How we were started in childhood will of course help or hinder, later on. All children pick up, along with their knowledge of the forms of language, some technique of adapting it to meet a situation. The child who has the good fortune to grow up among companions who are tactful and considerate—even though their speech may be incorrect in certain points of form—has a tremendous advantage in his later attitude toward the problem of communication. Of course, if his early companions also speak distinctly and correctly the advantage is still greater.

Youngsters learn a great deal indirectly from the conversation of their elders. The country boys of a generation ago, who listened in at the discussions of the village worthies round the post-office stove, learned there the thrust and parry of debate and a good deal, first and last, about conversational ethics. Good training was given in the small college or school of a generation ago, where teachers and students met on intimate terms, where "literary societies" gave each youngster practice in direct, spirited talk which had to reach a certain level of good form. "Conference," Lord Bacon remarked long ago, "maketh a ready man." There is a big law firm in downtown New York into which goes annually the top of the class from the Harvard Law School. It is the custom for one of the veteran members of the firm, engaged in the

more important cases, to take one of the striplings with him to interviews and conferences. The stripling sits in the conference, says nothing, but listens and learns.

But youthful study of communication can be only a foundation. It is only the man or woman carrying responsibilities who is prompted to look below the surface of conversation or address and perceive the bearing of this or that change of manner of presentation upon the feelings and actions of those concerned. What for a youth might be only a mechanical exercise is for the adult something that affects the outcome of an important undertaking. The reason the boy who goes early to work often gets the advantage in the race of life is largely the very fact that he early has to face the responsibilities of adult relationships, and hence develops early a serious attention to the way people react to stimulus.

Instances of Adjustment to Responsibilities.—People grow under responsibility. We often remark upon the rapidity and apparent ease with which a man moving up into a difficult position will master the technique of new and strange duties. In the case of women the same thing often shows strikingly in the matter of social adjustment. When we come close to such instances we generally find that these persons had already discovered for themselves the essentials of communication and had developed a considerable mastery of them.

Using Communication to Win Success.—A boy from a country town entered a little prairie college. He did fairly well in his studies and joined actively in student enterprises, managing the teams and other enterprises, and running them successfully and economically. After graduation he taught school for a while; then studied law, partly in night classes; then hung out his shingle in his home town, where he mixed in county politics. He attracted the attention of a city investment banker who was running for senator and got a small job in the city bank. A few years

more, and he became manager of the western branch of a great investment house. Later he opened his own business. When war came, as he was past the age of enlistment, he entered the quartermaster's department and made a distinguished record overseas in handling supplies. After the war he became assistant secretary of one of the federal departments, and is now again conducting his own business on a large scale.

This man has been a lifelong student of the essentials of business communication. Again and again he has gone ahead of men whose innate mental gifts were perhaps greater. One reason is, beyond a doubt, that he has always taken carefully into account, in his attack on the work of his position, the matter of his relationships with the people involved. Incidentally, there has come a significant change in his personal manner. As a youth he was always talking, and very often about himself. Now he talks much less, and in a less positive manner. He has learned the art of listening.

Using Communication to Help Others.—When the United States entered the war a young man in business in a western city went overseas in the Y. M. C. A. service. He proved to have a special knack for handling social and personal relations. He was prudent, modest, absolutely dependable, and came to be trusted by commanding officers with highly important and delicate duties. After the war the business leaders of one of the great financial centers became disturbed over a laxness among the boys employed in business houses. There was an epidemic of robberies of messengers, and troubles of other sorts. They got this man to take hold of the question of the boys in business, not the defectives but the bright, capable lads who were in line to be the executives of tomorrow if they could develop wisely. Today his work for the boys of the financial district is of national note. He has been friend and counsellor to thousands of boys, hundreds of them already growing up to positions of usefulness and responsibility. And a large number of leaders of American finance and industry

look upon this man as a personal friend and adviser in their most intimate problems with these young employees.

The reason is, more than anything else, his exceptional command of the power of communication. He is a man of few words, and these direct and simple in the extreme. He seems continually to see the one thing that needs to be said, in conversation or in his rare and brief public addresses; he says this and nothing more. He does not compromise. But he does not put his foot in it. He gets people to go along with him.

Studying Life Itself.—These men have studied communication where all of us may study it, in daily life. What you need to do primarily, particularly in the first stages of this study, is to note points of communication procedure, little and large, in the situations that come about in the stream of your regular activity, to try to catch their significance and apply them. Gradually you will organize them into principles. Communication is action, and it can be studied only in action, through observation, reflection, and experiment. Until you learn to read its teachings in life and draw from life, you get nowhere; you have not even begun.

But the thing can be done if you put your mind on it. Think of the persons of your acquaintance who are conspicuous for their ease and success in social and business contacts. If you are willing to give this matter a little time every day, beyond question you can develop bit by bit the sureness of touch that you admire in them. For you will be passing through the very process which they, in some way or other, have followed.

The Shell of Unconsciousness.—One of the chief difficulties of the entire process is that of getting started. As already pointed out, it is not natural for us to notice communication procedure; our conscious attention—normally—is focused upon content. When we first attempt to observe procedure, the *how*, we find ourselves switched to notice of content, of the *what*.

Thus when you first try to scrutinize the way you talk it may

seem like trying to get out of your skin. How are you to become conscious of what has been unconscious? You may look for trouble in the wrong place. You may try to change some feature that is really a merit, and entirely overlook the point that is causing the difficulty.

You might make a start through taking up the study of a particular form of communication which is new to you. By beginning with attention to technique in the new situation, you might be able, later on, to carry over the conscious technique into your habitual activities. Study of public speaking sometimes leads indirectly to improvement in one's conversation. Study of a foreign language sometimes helps in the same way. But the chances are against it. Poor human nature is so constituted that acquired skill in one form of speech rarely carries over to a habitual form, except through determined, conscious effort. A man may speak French with distinctness and good tone, yet retain his mumble and twang when talking his mother tongue.

Cracking the Shell.—Cracking the shell of unconsciousness is most likely to begin in an unexpected way, through casual notice of some odd little peculiarity in a public speaker, or in the conversation of a stranger. A reporter for a financial journal chanced to sit in the front row at a meeting of the American Bankers Association. The platform was high and he had to crane his neck to see the faces of the speakers. The president of a great New York bank got up to read a very long and very dull paper, and the reporter composed himself to slumber. But the distinguished banker, unaccustomed to standing before an audience, was nervous. Though his voice droned on calmly, his feet were not at ease; he was continually shifting his weight. The reporter's eye was caught by the financier's step-dancing and he began counting the shifts of position—435 in an address of forty minutes! He had a story for his intimates. The next time he had to report a speech, he watched the speaker's feet. Gradually he developed a critical attitude toward such "foot-work," which

led to discovery of other points of oratorical technique, then to a little wholesome attention to his own manner when called on unexpectedly for "remarks" at a club meeting, then to a class in public speaking, and finally to a thorough-going alteration in his general handling of communication.

Watching for a Lead.—The best way to crack the shell of your own unconsciousness is to lie in wait for some such lead. When by chance your attention is caught by some trifling mannerism in a speaker—posture, wording, intonation, sentence form, emotional attitude, or what not—follow it up.

You might utilize the dead time on trolley or train, in the office or at a dull meeting, watching some group engaged in conversation, or watching the public speaker whose tiresome talk you must sit through. You might shut your eyes and listen to the ups and downs of voices, the distinctness or slovenliness of utterance, or the peculiarities of pronunciation. Or you might notice the number of times a speaker says "and" or "I think" or "Listen!" You might time a speaker or a conversation group and count the number of slang phrases or the number of incomplete sentences in the space of three minutes, or the number of times the speakers interrupt each other. The range of possibilities is endless. What will catch your attention will probably be something not mentioned here; something which at first may appear quite unrelated to the problem of communication as you have thought of it. Whatever the item is, when it really strikes your notice you will be free for a while from the spell of listening for content, for the meaning. With respect to that one item you will be viewing the process of communication objectively, as you view a man's movements in running or skating.

Following the Lead.—Therefore, pursue this one item for a few days in every way possible, looking for the same thing in another speaker or group, and another, and so on. The practice of jotting down a brief note about each of the "cases" may lead

to notice of the relation of this item of manner or form to a speaker's communication as a whole and of its general bearing upon your impression of him. For example, if you discover that most of your "cases," in the space of three minutes by the watch, utter a dozen incomplete sentences, the appearance of one person all of whose sentences are complete will challenge closer scrutiny, to see whether it is a case of exceptional mental grip or merely of extra solicitude for grammar.

You may have the impulse, now, to do a little systematic reading on the special item you have been observing. Just taking the time to see for yourself whether other persons have noticed this same thing and what they have to say, often flashes a revealing significance upon something that has puzzled you. An evening at the public library, skimming books and magazine articles to check up this one item, may prove stimulating. You may find hardly anything about your point, or you may discover a great deal. What is said about it may prove to be connected with other items which will now take on for you a like significance.

By the time a week or so has passed, if you have kept eyes and ears open in the laboratory of daily contacts, the single point of technique is likely to have broadened; other items, related or unrelated, are likely to catch your quickened attention. These also can be looked up, if you like. After two or three have been thus identified others will probably be coming fast out of the mist. By the end of three or four weeks you will be freed from the tyranny of absorption in content and definitely out on the road of objective attention to the way a speaker—old or young, man or woman, learned or illiterate—plays the game of communication.

What to Study—The Situations of Life.—If you will consider the situations in which you are habitually placed, analyzing them to see what reactions they demand, gradually you will develop a sense of what is needed in a given situation, and will build up a real technique of operation.

Suppose, for convenience, we group communication situa-

tions under four heads corresponding to four chief phases of the life of an active man or woman, as follows:

The talk required in connection with the *responsibilities of your calling*.

That which is called out by the voluntary activities, social, professional, philanthropic, religious, and the like, in which you engage—the talk required *in connection with professional and social groups*.

That which is required in one's life at home and with intimates—the talk of *private hours*.

That which is required in one's relations with the community at large—talk to the *general public*.

What to Appraise in Speaker and Listener.—The president of one of the oldest and best-known of American publishing companies remarked, in connection with his reply to the questionnaire from the English teachers, that the purposes of all human communication may be summarized roughly as follows:

To ask information.

To impart information.

To express feeling.

To discover feeling in others.

To convince of the truth of a view.

To produce action.

Now it is evident, in the light of Chapter II, that certain characteristics in the attitude and performance of speaker and of listener will have bearing upon the effectiveness of transmission of thought and thus upon the degree to which these objectives are secured.

On the part of the sender—the speaker—such characteristics would include:

First, his control of the technique of language and its auxiliaries;

Second, his clear understanding of the limitations of the listener, of the medium of language, and of the message;

Third, his sincerity—that is to say, his directness, his freedom from disposition to wander from the point or to “show off,” his honesty of nature, and his courtesy.

On the part of the receiver—the listener—such characteristics would be:

First, his own command of the technique of language and its auxiliaries;

Second, his alertness of attention;

Third, his openness of mind as regards ideas, and his ability to allow properly for peculiarities of temperament in the speaker and for defects of the medium itself.

The Laboratory of Daily Experience.—These are all points that can be readily noted in the course of the day’s activities. Not a conversation, however casual or however formal, but may tell you something about how people talk and listen. Books will help. Lessons will help. But it is observation of life itself that is most important. And you can train yourself not only in greater alertness at the moment, but in the power of thinking back over a situation in a moment of leisure, and bringing into conscious notice just how the participants played their hands. The practice of deliberately analyzing just what happened in the course of a sale is a common requirement laid upon new salesmen in the training courses of sales organizations.

One result will be of a sort of double consciousness, so that you will be able to watch yourself even while engaged in eager discussion, and while giving close attention to the subject matter. Actors have this. Artists have it, many physicians and those who direct other people. Why not develop it for yourself?

Learning from Others.—Conversation with other persons about their own methods and experience is often useful, learning how *they* do the things which you also have to do. They may not always be able to tell you clearly what you want to know; you will have to edit or interpret their statements, and often

you will see that the significance of what they tell you is very different from what they suppose. But the frank talk of any man, however fragmentary it may be, about what goes on in his own mind, is a valuable corrective of inferences from your own experience.

Printed Aids, Perhaps.—At this point, perhaps, books will begin to be helpful. The works of reference which you consult for other purposes will be at hand for help in this matter also. What these have to tell will be supplemented by your general reading. It is human nature that you are studying, and the literature both of fact and of fiction will have many suggestions. Biographies, which describe the personality and manner of talk of historical figures, are a rich quarry. Stories, novels and plays, which give one man's notion of how other men of certain sorts have acted in certain situations, are suggestive sources, though they have to be taken with caution, because the novelist's notion of how people act may be unreal.

Taking Notes.—Very useful in any orderly investigation, as you probably know well, is the habit of jotting down notes of your observations, experiences, conferences, or reading—just brief notes on scraps of a "Buddy tablet" and thrown into a drawer at night. It is wise to follow a uniform method. Every note, however brief, ought to cover four points: first, the date and place—the time when you made the note will be increasingly significant as your study progresses; second, the fact noted; third, a background phrase or two to recall the circumstances; fourth, another brief phrase to show what you thought, at the moment, of the item's significance.

Such work may prove highly interesting. Keep notes and clippings in a set of folders corresponding, say, to the chapters of the book you are studying. Before long you will find items coming up continually in the daily papers, in the bulletins of a trade association, in the program of a dinner. Looking through

this file now and then will be suggestive. Your point of view will steadily advance. Unexpected relationships between items will develop. The dates will enable you to check your own progress and shift of view.

Thinking It Out.—Try to approach this matter of communication of thought always with an open mind, just as if you were the first investigator, as if no books or other authorities were in existence. A few years ago the Soviet government of Russia issued some descriptions of the courses of study to be followed in the new Bolshevik schools. While the point of view was in many respects absurd, the freshness of approach to some of the fundamental problems of learning and teaching was striking. These new Russian teachers say for instance: "Every school ought to have a dictionary. But very likely there is no money to buy a dictionary. Therefore, let the children make a dictionary."

You might try something like that for yourself. Try to draw up, for a new man coming into your business, a list of the special words and expressions he will need to know, and just what they mean. Or draw up for a friend from another town, coming into your social circle, a list of the individuals he will meet and just what you have learned about the way to talk with each of them to make sure of an agreeable contact. You may be astonished to find how the effort to set such things down will clarify your own conception of matters you have always known but never fully realized.

The Harvest of a Quiet Mind.—President Hopkins of Dartmouth College, not long ago, addressing a gathering of deans of American colleges, spoke of the vital importance in education of taking time to *think* things out for oneself. It is an element in life, he pointed out, which in our crowded modern existence far too many of us neglect.

We know very little about the particular forces exerted upon the minds of men in those periods of reflection and leisure and meditation which

were an absolutely inevitable and necessary concomitant of the life of early years. . . .

Daniel Webster during his period here in Dartmouth College taught school at Fryeburg, Maine. He used to ride through the forest and cross over the mountains. It was a trip of several days. We do it now by automobile in about as many hours. One queries what Daniel Webster was thinking about in those long rides and what the influence of those thoughts was upon his later life. You get like basis for speculation everywhere. You read the story of Washington. What was the effect upon Washington's later life and accomplishment, of those periods of reflection when he was off from companionship on his surveying trips, often days at a time, and thrown back onto himself. The life of Lincoln offers the same basis for speculation.

The child of the present day has no such incentive for reflection. . . .

There is something to do every moment, with the movie, with the automobile, with the radio, and when none of these are working the telephone is always available. . . .

It seems to me that entirely beyond all methods of technique, all questions of definite objectives, stands out this thing—that the time of the college course, rightly used, may be the period wherein men may be given something of the opportunity to think things out. . . .

These words apply to grown men and women as truly as to the youth in college and school. More important than all the information and stimulus that can be gained from others is the habit of cool, unhurried analysis of a subject for oneself. This is particularly true as regards improvement in the intimate activities of communication. After you have gone a certain distance in your study you are likely to feel the impulse to put down your own view of some point. By all means seize the impulse.

Giving Yourself a Chance.—And, above all, if you really want to improve, do not let yourself just sit down and read this book, or any other of the sort, straight through. To think the matter out for yourself, take your own time; stop and test each point by your own observation before passing it. Time is absolutely necessary to familiarize yourself with the subject so that you can see your way. If you were to gobble a discussion of

the subject you might get a mild passing interest here and there, but what you read would not penetrate; it would not remain with you any more than if you were to read straight through a laboratory manual. The one certain result would be to deaden whatever interest might have started in your mind. Having "read the book" in that hasty way, you would retain only a jumble of partially grasped items which almost at once would begin to fade from recollection. Very likely you might attempt to practice some of the suggestions that caught your eye as you ran through, before the "muscles" had grown to apply them. You would certainly fail in the specific thing attempted, and would end where you began.

A book like this is to be challenged as you go. Give yourself a chance. Each chapter is designed to open up one particular phase of the subject, to give a basis for your own analysis and comparison. What is said on any point is only a part of what might be said. Go through the chapters as occasion prompts you and retouch, enlarge, rebuild them for yourself, utilizing your own notes and your own experiences. Before long you will find that you are developing a knowledge of the problem of effective communication as regards your own case, which goes beyond that of any book or other outside source, but which you never could have had if you had not put your mind definitely on the problem.

Its closeness to life gives the study of talking, approached in this way, a special and gripping interest. As you follow along such a program you will find that the day's work moves better, and you will become aware of a sureness of touch in points where you did not have it before. For you will have begun to develop three of the greatest powers known to man: That of self-expression, of really "saying what you mean" wherever you are, whatever the circumstances, without stepping on any corns; that of reading between the lines as you listen to others, salvaging their real meaning however they blunder in presenting it; and that of estimating more justly your own thought, which means the power of better thinking.

PART II

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF YOUR CALLING

*Speech was made to open man to man, and not to hide him;
to promote commerce, and not to betray it.—DAVID LLOYD:
State Worthies.*

CHAPTER IV

SPEECH IN BUSINESS LIFE

A Necessity for All.—About one-third of the twenty-four hours, six days a week, goes to the occupation by which each of us makes his living. The amount of talking we have to do in connection with our day's work varies, of course, with the nature of the occupation, but with nearly everyone in a position of responsibility it is large as compared with all other occasions for speech. Obviously, our business talking is important. If we manage it in a way that is clear, direct, appropriate, and pleasing, our work goes faster and more smoothly. And obviously again, it is not something which we can engage in or leave alone, as we choose; we must take part whether we wish to or not, and whether or not we are good at it.

The Range of Business Conversation.—Business talking means, practically, conversation. Public speaking, except with a few special callings, has a negligible place. But think of the variety of the conversation in which the individual may be involved in the course of his day's work! There are the interviews of unlimited variety with associates—perhaps only two or three individuals in a one-room office or shop, perhaps the members of a vast organization. There are the negotiations with outsiders, customers or clients—who may range from a handful to the multitudes of the general public. Particularly if a man is in business for himself the range of such communication may be surprisingly wide. A little book entitled "Building Your Own Business,"¹ in which some sixty men tell how they built up successful enterprises, picture the number of rôles which the head

¹ A. C. Burnham, *Building Your Own Business*, The Ronald Press Company.

of a small business must enact in the course of a single business day.

Think of the millions of workers in offices, factories, and stores, of the other millions on farms and in mines, the professional workers, the millions of women "keeping house," with plenty of business talking in their work-day also. Is it possible to form any comprehensive picture of the business communication of all these people? Can ways of improvement be discovered that a busy man or woman can follow up without undue effort and cost?

Four Classes of Workers.—Bewildering as they are in number and diversity, human occupations may be grouped roughly, according to the communication responsibilities which they involve, into four broad classes:

1. Those whose work is carried on mostly in solitude. This class embraces a wide range of activities. It includes at one end people like the small farmer, the "lone fisherman," the woman who keeps her own small house, and also the laboratory experimenter, the artist or writer, any of whom may go through a working day and scarcely "see a soul."

2. Those who work alone in the sense that they have no partners or regular associates. There are more of these than of the preceding class. Their work and the kinds of conversation in which they must engage are still more diverse. The class includes the city salesman for a wholesale house who may call upon thirty or more customers in a day; the busy physician who may see a hundred patients; the bus or trolley conductor with his endless succession of passengers; the messenger in a big office who is trotting all day from one person to another.

3. Those who work in small groups or gangs. Here is a narrower range as regards the amount and nature of necessary speech. In many instances the group may be one in which individual activities are but slightly differentiated—stokers in a ship's engine-room; clerks in a big store; members of a railroad section

gang; barbers in a shop. On the other hand, the group may be a team of experts, each with a highly special function; a gun crew on a warship; a telephone line-crew; the staff of a research laboratory.

4. Those, finally, who direct the work of others. Here also the range is wide indeed and the frequency of communication occasions varies greatly. This class includes, for example, the foremen of the gangs just mentioned; the business executives whose duties involve constant dealing with many members of their own organization and perhaps many outsiders; the teachers in a school; and those housewives who have children, servants, neighbors, tradespeople, and book-agents to deal with daily.

Conversation Responsibilities.—Some general points may be noted regarding the conversation requirements of the four classes. For class 1, occasions of necessary talk are on the whole few and irregular, though contacts may be made with a rather wide range of persons and may be comparatively important. For class 3, while the occasions for business talk are likely to be frequent they are mostly of routine nature, brief and with immediate associates. The work of classes 2 and 4, however, involves a great deal of talking with persons varying widely in character and position. If only classes 1 and 3 were concerned, the problem of command of speech in business life might not be so serious. But consider classes 2 and 4, which have much in common—the men and women who, as salesmen, professional workers, or representatives of service organizations, are meeting many others, and the men and women who are engaged in supervising the work of other people. The most important and influential workers in human society are in these classes. How they manage their interviews and negotiations seriously affects the dispatch of society's business. And of course the talk of the other classes may at any time involve something highly important. Almost anyone, in fact, may be called on at a moment's notice to take part in a momentous interview, or even to make a speech to a large group.

The scientific expert whose work is ordinarily carried out in solitude may be summoned to explain a new plan to the head of the firm. Every now and then a member of a gang or squad is called from the ranks to assume the direction of his old associates as foreman or supervisor.

It may be of interest to apply to your own case the analysis here given, to see in which of the groups your own activities fall, and in just what ways command of the technique of talk enters into successful discharge of them.

Range of Intensity.—Now think a moment of the wide range of “intensity” in business conversation. It is employed for trivial routine matters too slight to justify the use of writing. But it is used also for the most delicate or most momentous transactions, for which writing is too slow or too clumsy. The superintendent of a great store remarked recently: “I never use writing when I have to make a personal criticism of a high-tension executive. Better a friendly conversation, in which the criticism can be conveyed delicately, leaving nothing on the record to mortify his pride.”

Conversation is used also when large-scale policies or plans have to be set forth briefly and quickly in flexible terms, to be modified in face to face thrust and parry. A year or so before his death, Judge Gary said in an address to the students of New York University on “Business Fundamentals”:

Much of large business is negotiated. Many of the biggest commercial transactions result from discussions between two or more persons, dealing at arm’s length, having no fixed prices or exact basis for measuring or valuing, and depending entirely upon reaching an agreement which is mutually satisfactory, or at least acceptable. Neither side is under moral obligation to expose what is in the mind as an ultimatum or maximum. In such cases there is no reason for disclosure of the mental operations, though of course there can be no justification for misrepresentation or fraud of any kind. Here is opportunity for discretion and sagacity.

Most of Judge Gary’s speech dealt with general principles

of conduct, and time-honored injunctions regarding integrity, industry, and courtesy. The one specific point of method which he selected for the attention of these young men setting out on a business career was this matter of business conversation.

Striking confirmation of Judge Gary's estimate of the importance of common conversation is furnished by the careers of the elder J. P. Morgan, and of George F. Baker. We find these men accomplishing their momentous work in guiding vast interests by means of private conversation. In every community there are men who operate in the same way, whose voices are not heard in public, who may be little known by the community in general, but who steadily mould the course of the town's life through their skill in conversation at important junctures.

Business Conversation versus Social Conversation.—Now business conversation is fundamentally different from social conversation. Business conversation has always a definite object. In social conversation the exchange of thought is an end in itself, but in business talk it is only a means. Jones addresses Brown not because he enjoys conversing but because he wants Brown to buy something or to sell something, to give him information or advice, in short, to take some action that will be profitable to Jones or enable Jones to carry out work that has been assigned him. Brown may yield, may resist, or in his turn may attempt to persuade Jones to some alternative action. Jones and Brown may be strangers, may even dislike each other cordially as individuals, and yet may carry on business conversation very satisfactorily.

Moreover, when the business decision has been reached the conversation ceases.

An Element of Grim Seriousness.—Thus, as there is always something at stake in business conversation, there is always an element of grim seriousness, whatever the subject, which in the talk of social life is absent. In many business conversations there

is a conflict of interests, actual or potential, which is threshed out to some sort of agreement. In nearly every instance there is a conflict of wills, more or less definitely sensed by one or both parties. In social conversation, as there is no ulterior objective, there is often a contest of wits but rarely a struggle of wills.

Limited Relationships.—One other essential characteristic of business conversation should be noted; it is a matter of limited relationships. Personal values enter into it comparatively little. Salesman and prospect are not concerned with each other's private affairs. Members of an office staff deal with one another as functionaries, not as all-round intimates. Two men died some years ago who had been life-long partners in a drygoods jobbing house. Neither had ever crossed the other's threshold. Both were Massachusetts Yankees of the same party and church, and in later years their children discovered that the tastes of the two families were closely parallel. These life-long partners had nothing to do with each other outside of business, though for forty years they were excellent friends.

In the western mining camp no questions were asked as to your past. In the conversation of business there is little inquisition outside the range of the stipulated relationships.

Low Level of Efficiency.—And yet, in this vitally important activity the batting average of most of us is far from high. The "mortality" among salesmen, with whom command of selling talk is a matter of bread and butter, is notoriously large. Companies distributing "specialties" find scarcely one in ten of the men they try out who can handle his selling negotiations successfully, and among retail salespeople the proportion of those who are really effective in their sales talk to customers is even smaller; the vast majority behind the counter are merely order-takers.

In directing the energies of other workers the scoring is scarcely better. Manufacturers must spend time and effort to get foremen who can handle a group of workers satisfactorily.

The big retail stores have trouble in finding aisle managers who can be trusted to direct the salespeople and stock force under them and to deal with perplexed or complaining customers. An efficiency of 60 per cent is the best that has been obtained by one of the ablest organizations in the country, which pays good wages and gives particular attention to training its personnel.

A "Preventable Waste."—And the same sort of record is found among men in higher positions. The conduct of interviews and negotiations by senior executives is not nearly as efficient as one might suppose. The report on "Waste in Industry,"² made by the Federation of Engineering Societies some years ago, charged over 50 per cent of preventable waste in American industry to defects of management. A large proportion of this was unquestionably owing to poor direction of the working force, that is to say, inadequate explanation of policies and methods; inadequate training; clumsy supervision—all of which comes down to poor handling of important talk by persons in authority. The president of one of the greatest American industrial concerns used to say: "One of the chief difficulties of an executive is to get his subordinates—and his associates—to say what they mean." The vice-president and chief owner, by inheritance, of a certain long-established and successful company manufacturing clothing, is a young man, college trained, of excellent business judgment. His one defect is that he cannot trust himself in talk. He has to sit back and leave important contacts in connection with plans he has himself worked out, to be handled by his assistants. With the best of intentions, he gets mixed up when he talks, and irritates subordinates and customers alike. The instance might be paralleled in every business or professional circle.

The Heart of the Difficulty—Two Contradictory Requirements.—Why do we function so badly? The first cause, undoubtedly, is the general human tendency to "soliloquize."

² Waste in Industry, McGraw-Hill Co.

Particularly when a subject is of great importance to one of the persons concerned, he is prone to think only of the idea and to forget the indispensable point of conveying it to the other man's mind. The professor before his class, the physician with his patient, the angry customer at the complaint desk of a store, the executive who wastes his own time and that of a department head while he scolds about a department showing, are all victims of the general temptation to soliloquize.

But the special difficulty with business conversation arises from the need of balancing two contradictory principles. The conversation must be businesslike and at the same time conversational. To harmonize the two requirements is entirely possible and some persons do it with a high degree of success. But it cannot be done without thought and effort. Almost everyone forgets, once in a while, and leans too far one way or the other, and an occasional lapse may breed long-lived trouble.

The Talk Must Be Businesslike.—It is to be remembered that for either party to carry his point requires energy, alertness, shrewdness, and steady pressure. As in a wrestling match, if you let up at any moment you may be thrown on your back. We are all disposed to forget this basic truth. The interview or negotiation is begun by the other person before we realize it and presently we find ourselves at a disadvantage, because we did not have on our "trading clothes" at the start. Many times, also, when it is *we* who initiate the interview, we waste the opening moments in purely social conversation of a kind that does not help our business purpose but instead gives time for the other man to put on *his* trading clothes, so that when we do try to "talk business" we find him only too ready for us.

Robert Lansing, Secretary of State under President Wilson, has described³ the methods by which M. Clemenceau, as Chairman of the Conference, succeeded in carrying through so much of the French program. Particularly striking is the picture of

³ Robert Lansing, *The Big Four, and Others of the Peace Conference*, Houghton Mifflin Co.

the statesmen in the private meetings of the Council of Ten—a directors' meeting where not force but persuasiveness had to be used:

Clemenceau presiding over the Council of Ten was a different Clemenceau from him who presided over the plenary sessions of the Conference on the Preliminaries of Peace. . . . Within the council chamber his domineering manner, his brusqueness of speech, and his driving methods of conducting business disappeared. He showed patience and consideration toward his colleagues and seldom spoke until the others had expressed their views. It was only on rare occasions that he abandoned his suavity of address and allowed his emotions to affect his utterances. . . . His manifest purpose was to obtain unanimity by mutual concessions.

His colleagues in the Council of Ten, Mr. Lansing concludes:

Might and, in a few cases, did grumble and complain outside the Council as to the way matters were being handled but . . . the suavity, good nature and unfailing courtesy of the Tiger silenced those who were dissatisfied. In the endeavor to match the shrewd old statesman in politeness and geniality, they failed to use these qualities in the way that he did. He used them to disarm his opponents and prevent vigorous objection. His colleagues used them to soften the blows which they intended to deliver.

In negotiations or interviews one has to keep in mind always the foundation of grim earnest.

It Must Be Brief and Direct.—Furthermore, we have to cover the ground quickly. The salesman must see a number of prospects during the day. The manager, the lawyer, the physician, cannot, any of them, spend too much time on one case; the teacher must get round his class. The general manager of a big New York specialty shop has a fifteen-minute interview with each of his hundred-odd department "buyers" every two weeks—nearly three hours out of every one of his crowded working days. Every one of those quarter-hours has to be utilized to the full, or the business feels it.

Hence business talk must be brief, direct, explicit. But too

often we get so interested in a detail of the matter in hand, that for a while we lose sight of our objective and waste precious time. Because we do our business always with and through *persons*, we are continually in danger of being diverted from the business object by some purely personal influence, agreeable or disagreeable. There is hardly any one who does not err in this way now and then.

A New York lawyer engaged in consulting practice said once: "I wish you could teach people to go away when they've finished their business. Nine people out of ten who come in here hang round five or ten minutes after we are through, talking about some private matter that has nothing to do with the case in hand, or telling me a story. The New York working day is only about seven hours, but one hour of the seven is wasted in that sort of thing every day."

But Not Too Businesslike.—Yet this remark of the lawyer brings out the other aspect of business conversation—it can never be conducted with machine-like precision. To be too obviously *businesslike* is fatal. There is an element deep in human nature that resents being "crowded." Few persons have such detachment of mind as to be able to take orders from a "machine." The go-getter salesman who overwhelms his prospect makes fewer sales after all than the one who allows his prospect, seemingly, to "take his own time," and he is less likely to be welcomed on a second or third visit. Many a well-meaning foreman or manager has failed because his zeal has made him a martinet. He gives orders too sharply; or he is preoccupied; or he allows himself too little time in presenting a matter to his subordinates. Particularly when the object is to obtain information, it is often most unwise to hurry—the other person must be led to feel that he can take all the time he wishes or he will not open up.

Features of Social Conversation Needed in Business.—To put it briefly, business conversation must observe some of the principles of social conversation, widely different though the types

are, at bottom. We cannot overlook the personal element in these agents through whom our business has to be done. If their tastes and prejudices are not consulted, they resent it, and our task becomes difficult if not impossible. The long way round is often the shortest way home, in business talking.

Then there are what might be called the "good manners" requirements of business conversation. It must not be too unlike social conversation in external form. An appearance of ease, casualness, give and take, even of rambling, is often indispensable.

The Technique of Language and Delivery.—And so the communication of business life calls for the fullest command of the technique of language, utterance, and manner. You must be able to keep to the point without abruptness or discourtesy. In many cases, though you must not appear evasive, you cannot be entirely explicit. You have continually the problem of determining when and how to close the interview. To allow the conversation to stop before you have won your point is poor management. On the other hand, to go on talking once the objective is gained is wasteful and may be fatal. Or you may see that it is wise to break off the interview for the time to avoid an open clash. Success in keeping the talk in hand and steering it to the right harbor depends very largely upon easy command of the little points of detail technique, which are discussed later in Part VI.

Hence the study of language in dictation, and in the incidental talk of chance contacts, helps very greatly in business situations. The man who has acquired deft and pleasant ways of wording his thought finds them coming to his lips when he needs them in interviews and negotiations. The manager who has learned to convey in a phrase or two a greeting or inquiry, a commendation or a suggestion, and pass on, has constant use for his skill. He is able to trust details largely to his automatic reactions—as the tennis expert trusts his serve to his arm and trunk muscles—and to concentrate on the strategy of the game.

Judge Gary had this to say to the college boys about the technique of business conversation :

A wise father used to say to his sons : "Remember as you go through life every man you meet in business is a little smarter than you." This idea is worth remembering.

The average man talks too much, especially if he has a good command of language. It is well to let the other man talk half the time. Each one is trying to "size up" the other before naming figures or stating final conclusions. "A wise man keeps a close mouth." In an extended discussion the experienced and wise man, if he is a good listener, is able to determine with considerable accuracy something of what is in the mind of the other man. One should carefully weigh every word that is uttered by oneself and by the other person as well, and in doing so one can also form an intelligent opinion of the integrity of the other and the reliability of a statement that the offer made is the "last dollar" that will be paid or accepted as the case may be.

Thus it will be noted that one can be truthful and specific in a business transaction and perhaps at the same time save a good deal of money by silence and discretion. It is well for a young man to listen to negotiations in big transactions by experienced elders if opportunity is presented.

Practice in Everyday Situations.—Listening in, watching the methods of other persons, makes possible intelligent practice. And after all, is not that the chief essential? Skill in conversation is not a thing to which anyone is born. A man can discover and develop his own possibilities only in the way followed by the Garys and Bakers, that is to say, by putting his mind upon the opportunities for practice that come along from day to day, the little emergencies of daily intercourse. It is in the bush league, the corner-lot games, that the good players must be developed. If a man is tumbled into a big occasion without years of practice on minor occasions he is likely to have weak muscles and unsteady nerves. He loses his head because he does not know what to do. Furthermore, the big moment comes only now and then. With even the greatest negotiator, most occasions for the exercise of his skill concern minor matters and persons within his usual acquaintance. The importance of these minor occasions,

taken all together, is incontestably greater than that of the few big ones, and the practitioner who forges ahead is the one who is sure in his operation, however large or small the occasion. Such men get the reputation of success which goes halfway toward winning a contest beforehand. To be sure, the minor occasion may be highly exacting. More skilful diplomacy is needed, often, in handling a controversy inside a small office force than in a conflict with a great rival organization.

It is the repeated practice that develops the technique which carries one through. When the big emergency comes it proves usually to be only a repetition of a situation already met and solved, and the mind functions easily because there is no nervousness.

Yet the plain truth is that most men, even in highly responsible positions, fail to think out any systematic technique for their business conversations. We remain beginners because we continue to take each case "on its merits"; we do not classify and compare our cases and discover principles. Such lack of method is wasteful and ineffective. It means inconsistency and trouble when the occasions become numerous.

No doubt the reason for neglect of technique is the seemingly endless variety of business conversation. While a few forms have been studied and standardized few attempts have been made at comprehensive analysis. Yet one would suppose, in view of what is at stake, that the effort would be made. Benjamin Franklin would do it, if he were in business today.

The Occasions for Business Conversation.—Suppose we set down the varieties of business conversation which most frequently present themselves in any occupation, leaving out of consideration for the moment the individual concerned. Would not the following list very nearly cover the case for any business or professional establishment?

Buying
Selling

- Obtaining credit and financing
- Extending credit
- Collecting money
- Making inquiries
- Giving information
- Reporting to superiors on work assigned
- Asking favors
- Offering suggestions
- Giving advice
- Encouraging, correcting, reproving subordinates or agents
- Determining policies and plans
- "Service talk" with customers and clients
- "Good-will" or publicity talk

Five Main Relationships.—And now is it not possible to classify these fifteen types of situations with reference to the relations of the persons concerned? First and obvious would be a division into talk within the organization and talk with outsiders. A salesman may have nearly all his conversational contacts outside. A factory foreman or a member of the accounting staff of a big house may have nearly all within the organization. A professional man employing one or two assistants will have to cover both fields very fully.

Within an organization conversational contacts may be grouped on the basis of official rank, into the talk of subordinate with superior, the talk of superior with subordinate and the talk of persons of equal authority. Contacts with outsiders may be grouped roughly, for our present purpose, under two heads. There is the wide range of contacts which have to do in some way with obtaining or imparting necessary information about the work in which we are engaged and with the conduct of relations between the outsider or his organization and ourselves. We may call this service talk. There are also the specialized contacts connected with buying or selling merchandise or services. We may call this trading talk.

We should have, then, five broad types or classes, as follows:

Within the organization :

Subordinate to superior: Reports

Superior to subordinate: Orders and instructions

Equals with equals: Conferences

Outside the organization :

Service talk

Trading talk

Whether a man is a member of a vast organization or is in business for himself, whether he is a professional man—physician, lawyer, engineer, soldier or sailor, or farmer; whether a woman is a housewife, or engaged in some form of personal service, or like a man is “in business,” is it not true that the purposeful conversations which he, or she, carries on in the course of the day or the year, classify themselves into these five types?

All-Round Training—a Duty to Ourselves.—How many of us give ourselves any thorough training in the technique of the business talk which our positions require? Most of us, it is true, cultivate some one type of business conversation which recurs frequently in our experience—the salesman his “approach”—the adjuster his methods of disarming an angry complainant—the housewife her defense against canvassers—the nurse her manner with a fretful patient. Even in our specialty, however, are we not apt to do only what those immediately around us “have always done”? Do we often take the trouble to inquire whether better ways of handling such situations have been developed by other persons in our line but outside of our acquaintance? One of the large New York department stores, until very recently, appeared to pride itself upon its disregard of the operating methods developed by competing stores, and notably in the very matter of communication of information and impulse. Other stores had developed buyers’ meetings with their sales force, etc. This store “got along without” all these until forced by stern competition and serious loss of business to change its course.

To confine attention to the requirements of our present position, moreover, is hardly the most prudent course. With any man, circumstances may so change that he will find himself called upon for activities to which he has given no heed. A professor of chemistry, known only as a research man, becomes president of a university of national scope and has to turn his attention to administration and public contacts. A country banker is brought by a turn of circumstances to New York and becomes head of a great department store system. An accountant in a state banking department is promoted to be commissioner of banking and before long is successively drafted to become commissioner of police in New York City, vice-president of a telegraph and cable company, and president of a metropolitan bank. Similar shifts of position and duty are going on constantly throughout the ranks of business and professional life. No one knows what may be required of him by the new position waiting round the corner.

Moreover, everyone needs some command of all the types of business communication, if not to make aggressive use of various forms of technique as "pitcher," at least as "catcher," to understand them all when others try them on him. In business talk every one must compete, in a sense, for the all-round championship.⁴

⁴ Many interesting and helpful suggestions with respect to the technique of business conversation are to be found in "Influencing Human Behavior," by Professor Harry A. Overstreet, published by the W. W. Norton Co.

CHAPTER V

SUBORDINATE TO SUPERIOR

Upper and Lower.—Wherever people work together, in a giant organization like the General Electric Company, or in the office of a professional man with one stenographer, or a school-room with teacher and pupils, or a family circle, there are always superiors and subordinates. "When two men ride on a horse," runs the old saying, "one must ride behind." The handling of communication between those above and those below is a most important element in human intercourse. We are all concerned with it from two distinct points of view. We are all subordinates in relation to parents and teachers, and at the start of our adult calling. In certain phases of our activity we remain subordinates, practically all of us, to the end of our days. On the other hand, nearly everyone before long becomes in his turn a superior—at least he sets up his own household—and has subordinates of his own. Let us consider first the communication from lower to upper.

The Subordinate's Function.—The subordinate's function is to care for some particular portion or phase of an enterprise, under direction. This involves communication responsibilities of a very definite kind. He must keep those above him informed of the matters under his charge, so that they can decide intelligently what is to be done. While they have general knowledge of the situation, they must rely upon him for close information, and to some extent, for suggestions. No enterprise, large or small, can continue to operate unless the subordinates succeed in passing along to the chiefs with fair adequacy the information which only their eyes can discover.

In the army, in which organization has been for ages careful and elaborate, and which includes masses of subordinates, some of low levels of intelligence, many with poor command of language, the need of attention to the talk of subordinate with superior was long ago recognized. A rigid code of standardized phrases has been worked out, what might be called, in the vernacular of business, "oral forms." Fiction has made everyone familiar with the formula for sentry duty: "Halt! Who goes there? Advance to be recognized!" Less dramatic forms are:

"Sir, the guard is formed."

"All present or accounted for, Sir."

"Colonel Greene's compliments, Sir. Will the Captain report to him at Headquarters at once."

"Captain Blank reports to the Colonel."

In business, where the personnel can be more carefully selected and where the bonds uniting subordinates and superiors are closer than in the army, the technique of the subordinate's talk is more flexible; more is left to his initiative and judgment.

In far too many organizations, however, large or small, the technique of this vitally important phase of communication is poorly observed or understood by the great mass of those in subordinate positions, and even by those well up the ladder. That is a serious hindrance to the dispatch of the world's business.

Whatever the individual's work may be, an orderly analysis of the communication which is required in his own dealings with those above him in authority—whether the relation is permanent or temporary—is well worth any time and effort it may cost.

Reports and Suggestions.—The communications of the man below to the man above are of two distinct types. First, he has to give account of matters committed to his charge—he has to make reports. This is his peculiar and characteristic communication duty. The second type of communication appears when he volunteers advice as to matters not definitely committed to him—when he offers suggestions and requests. The amount and

nature of this second form of communication will vary according to his position, his experience, and his personal relations to his superiors.

Reports.—A report has been defined as a statement of fact, from one who has knowledge of a matter but not the responsibility of decision, to one who has the responsibility of decision but who lacks close personal knowledge.¹ Reports have been made ever since one man worked under another's direction. In the modern age of cooperative enterprise they have multiplied. So far as possible, of course, important reports are put into writing. Engineers' reports, those of high officials of a company to the upper executives, of the officers of a corporation to the stockholders, and so on, are often very elaborate documents. Even today, however, for every written report there are hundreds which have to be made by word of mouth. Preparing these and presenting them constitutes the main part of the subordinate's communication to his superiors.

There are two quite different kinds of reports: They might be termed period or routine reports, and special reports.

Period Reports.—Period reports summarize the history of a regular portion of time. They keep the superiors informed of the progress of matters assigned to the subordinate's care. They cover largely routine happenings. If the time covered is short, the report may be no more than a brief remark to the supervisor or department head as he makes his rounds in factory or office. If the period is longer, more items have to be covered, and the report is fuller and more difficult to present and to understand.

Orderliness a Main Requirement.—The prime requirement in period reports is orderliness. Such statements have to be presented month after month and sometimes day after day, with little change in substance. On any one occasion most of the items require but slight mention, just enough to let the chief see

¹ Ralph U. Fitting, *Report Writing*, Ronald Press Company.

that things are running smoothly, so that he can turn to the few points where something has gone wrong or where an unexpected situation has arisen. The operating head of a leading New York store used to say: "Two per cent of my attention for the things that are all right, and 98 for the few that are wrong."

To enable the chief to get the picture with a minimum of effort and time—as an inspecting officer runs his eye down the ranks of marching men—two things are necessary in the reports given him: regularity of arrangement of items and regularity of treatment.

Obviously there must be regularity of mention, following the same sequence of items every time. The chief has a duty here. The subordinate's task is simplified if he can be given a definite pattern to follow. This is an age-old practice in armies, where the order of mention in reports is prescribed in detail.

Regularity of treatment or wording is also essential. In a good period report the individual items are covered in a swift, light, summarizing manner, so that each one is recognizable without being so prominent as to distract the chief's attention from the matters which demand special consideration.

In department stores difficulty exists in getting intelligent oral reports from buyers, because of the fact that many buyers are too impatient and temperamental to master detail. Following is a typical example of the report of such a buyer to a merchandise manager, regarding stock conditions in the buyer's department.

Merchandise Manager: "How are you fixed for street dresses, \$30 to \$50?"

Buyer: "Got plenty and a lot on order coming in this week. In fact demand seems to be for better-priced ones. Why, this week sold such and such. . . ."

Merchandise Manager: "Interesting if so—but your call slips show you short of the others—How many have you?"

Buyer: "Let's see,—um-ah—about 60 dresses."

Merchandise Manager: "How are they divided?"

Buyer: "I don't know. I'll call my office." In this case the buyer shows ignorance of the condition of her department.

The report should have been made somewhat like this:

Merchandise Manager: "How are you fixed for street dresses \$30 to \$50?"

Buyer: "All right on \$45 and \$49.50—a little short on \$30 and \$35. Will be O. K. tomorrow on the \$39.50's. We have 20 in 4 styles coming in. We need to buy more \$30 and \$35's. I was going to ask for more money to purchase some of them. However, the heaviest demand seems to be for better-priced dresses. Here are the reorders ready for your signature."

Training in Report Preparation.—The quality of the period report depends upon the subordinate's intelligence and steady attention to the task. It is no easy matter to boil down a series of minor happenings to a few brief points and then recount them concisely and unobtrusively in conversational terms, without emphasizing the wrong items, without blurring matters that should be kept apart, and without wasting words. Some do this condensation or rather miniature painting surprisingly well, most persons only passably, many very badly. Perhaps there is no way in which a subordinate can do so much to improve his work and his standing as by attention to this one point.

It helps greatly of course if the chief, besides setting a good "copy," can give his assistants some training in the actual presentation of reports. But the chief has too many troubles of his own to keep straightening out the tangled stories of careless subordinates.

Advantages from Early Training.—In some progressive schools today far-sighted teachers are careful to lay a foundation for this duty of making reports which in some form or other will be required in later life of every student. Boys and girls can readily be disciplined in presenting to their teachers well-built oral reports of their school tasks. It is a most valuable part of their English study, giving a basis for orderly speech and writing

in any situation. The relation of pupil to teacher is like that of subordinate to superior in business. The pupil's "job" is to learn a lesson. The more smoothly and concisely he can report his performance, the more time the teacher has for attention to the "two per cent" of unsuccessful work, the difficult points which it is his special responsibility to clear up. The teacher differs from the business or professional superior in that his main job is that of training the young people in their jobs. He has time not merely to set a copy but to show the youngsters how to follow it, to drill them until a swift, concise, even summary of routine matters comes to be a habit with them. It is a pity that more schools have not seen the light. No effort in later life can do so much to build right habits in this matter as right training in the early school years.

Self-Training.—Insistence upon orderliness in presenting routine matter is apt to be irksome to the very persons who are in most ways the best workers and most fitted for advancement. People of quick mind and strong initiative are very apt to rebel at a set form, to tire of everlastingly combing out the petty snarls which always present themselves in the report of an actual situation. These persons often win advancement in spite of inability to tell a thing in orderly form, but they are like spirited horses never properly broken; their usefulness to associates and themselves is always less than it should be. In youth the habit of orderly presentation can be acquired by anyone, however individual or temperamental, with comparative ease. When boys and girls are trained at school in the elementary steps of report-making, a good many of the difficulties of later business and professional activity may disappear.

If a man has missed such discipline in youth, he should set about getting it for himself. He can do a good deal merely by thinking about the matter. Nearly always, if he will analyze carefully first his own job, and then the situation and the personal characteristics of his chief, he will find that he can work

out for himself a method that will mean decided improvement. The things mainly to guard against are his own loss of patience, his impulse to vary from the regular line, or to inject his own thoughts and feelings into what should be plain statement of facts.

Special Reports.—The subordinate who reaches a position of responsibility is often confronted with a more difficult task. Some matter outside of routine comes up, about which special information is required. It is delegated to a subordinate for investigation and perhaps recommendation as to what shall be done. This necessitates a special report. The range of such reports in life is limitless, from the "Go see what Johnny is doing and tell him he mustn't!" of the foolish nursemaid, to elaborate study of trade conditions, involving journeys of thousands of miles and interviews with hundreds of persons. An active chief in a large organization is continually starting things for others to carry through. The president of one of the largest of the state universities once defined his own main duty as that of originating ideas and plans. The responsibility for investigating the ideas, testing them, finding ways of carrying them out, rested on the deans and heads of departments.

Accuracy and Completeness.—In all special reports the essentials are the same. There is a specific problem which the chief formulates in general terms but has not time to state in much detail. He turns this over to a subordinate to bring back accurate information, clearly stated, on which his own decision can safely rest.

There is the same necessity for accurate observation and sound analysis as in the period report, for selecting matter that will give a true picture without taking too much of the chief's time, for clear and easy presentation. Each step of the process is more difficult, however, than with the period report. In the presentation—the talk itself—orderliness is no longer the main

requirement. Orderliness is necessary, but it is secondary in importance to completeness.

Preliminary Explanation or Frame.—In a period report there is little need of framing the picture or outlining the situation; the chief already has that in mind. In a special report this is absolutely essential. Though the chief has set the problem, he has probably not been thinking of it. Certainly there are factors of which he has no knowledge. The first task of the subordinate is to give a brief set-up of the situation; what the problem is; why it had to be studied; what procedure of investigation, if any, was indicated by the chief. All this may take only a few sentences but it must not be omitted.

Even active and conscientious workers often neglect this preliminary explanation in their oral reports. Preoccupied with what they have been doing, they assume that it is all as definitely in the foreground of the chief's mind as in their own, and they plunge into details without letting the chief get his bearings. This puts undue strain on the chief's thought and temper. If he is himself preoccupied with other matters he is likely either to be vexed—which puts him in no good humor for hearkening to any recommendations which the subordinate may have to offer,—or he gets an imperfect grasp of the situation which leads eventually to a wrong decision.

The letters of careful business houses, and similarly the report forms prescribed in the army, provide for a short opening statement or reminder of the occasion for the communication. These may well be studied by the subordinate who wishes his spoken reports to have full effectiveness.

The preliminary set-up should be concise. A long preamble is as bad as abruptness. Here is a fault often found in a higher subordinate whose responsibility is comparatively wide and whose relations with superiors are informal and personal. Deeply interested himself in the task he has completed, and knowing that it is of importance to the chief, such a man is prone to forget

that the chief has not time to walk round the whole course. Here again is the responsibility of artistic compression.

The power of getting started on the case in a few words is as constantly useful in the subordinate's talk to his chief as in the advertising writer's "copy." Take the last report you had to make to your chief. Try to recall just how you began it—your opening sentence or two—and see if you can reword that beginning so as to say more in the same space, without making it less easy and natural.

Objectiveness in Statement of Facts.—The bulk of the special report is of course the statement of the facts discovered. Here is needed, besides orderliness, an attitude of cool objectiveness. The facts should be presented not only clearly but without being colored by the investigator's personal opinion or feelings. The subordinate has primarily the rôle of a messenger bidden to go and *see*, and bring back a true picture. The duty of objective presentation is often poorly performed, even by conscientious, clear-sighted, impartial investigators. They forget, when they bring in their report, that the chief has not the background which their observation has built up for them, and cannot, therefore, at the outset share the opinions or feelings to which they have been brought. He comes to the matter cold, whereas they are warm with details. As a result, a report that is entirely sound in basis, the conclusions of which are plain deductions from the facts, may appear to the chief so incoherent or so colored with feeling as to be untrustworthy, so that he discounts what his investigator says and is prompted to decide contrary to what may be a perfectly sound recommendation.

Or, what is more harmful for the enterprise, the chief may be misled by his confidence in the subordinate's honesty, devotion, and general competence and adopt a recommendation too readily. This is a danger peculiar to the trusted subordinate in an upper position, whose relations with his chief are close. The chief has so much on his mind that he naturally is glad to delegate

matters, wherever possible, to an assistant whom he trusts, with the result, perhaps, of serious error. The more responsible the subordinate's position, the more need always for his stating facts objectively and impartially.

Keeping the Chief Informed.—A duty never to be neglected by the subordinate is that of keeping the chief definitely informed of the progress of the assigned task, and of letting him know at once when it has been completed. The situation is parallel to that of the issuance of a written order and its return or acknowledgment. Napoleon at Waterloo thought General Grouchy with his army was at a certain place, as ordered. But the matter had not been checked by Napoleon's aides; Grouchy, as it turned out, had not been able to reach the place assigned; "and so the battle was lost."

That is to say, the subordinate has always the responsibility for completing the information in the mind of the superior, of telling him plainly: "It has been done"; or "This much has been done"; or "It cannot be done," together with the reason, thus making clear to the man who is responsible for results exactly what is the situation. The subordinate who has knowledge of the *flow* of a matter in terms of time—whether the time schedule planned is being met or is being delayed—should keep the superior informed of the progress.

Statement of Conclusions and Recommendations.—A special report involves also a statement of inferences or conclusions, and of recommendations. Here are needed both definiteness and moderation. Definiteness is indispensable. The subordinate may not himself need to have his inferences set down in explicit terms; he possesses first-hand knowledge. The superior, however, has only the data which the subordinate's story has given him; if he is to see clearly what the story means, he must have an explicit statement. And moderation is no less important. The subordinate, after all, is only an agent. It is not his responsibil-

ity to determine the action to be taken. Too great insistence on the opinion he has formed may do harm.

To be able to present findings explicitly, briefly, and in a manner suggesting calm soundness of judgment, is vital to success in this part of a subordinate's work. The assistant manager of a fire insurance company lately remarked to a friend: "I have to make reports continually to the general manager about important matters. My hardest work is to find words which will make the boss realize the importance of what I say without leading him to think I am excited."

The conclusions which grow up in an investigator's mind as a result of his study of a case are generally of two distinct types. There are his reasoned inferences or *findings*—summaries of facts to which any careful observer who had passed over the same road would presumably be led. There are also his *opinions*, the reaction of his individuality to the facts and situations under consideration. The chief will probably wish to obtain both types of conclusions, if the subordinate is a good investigator. The opinions may be as valuable as the definite findings. But the two should be kept separate. The findings should come first, in explicit, cool form, all personal elements omitted. The opinions should be withheld until the impersonal report of findings is complete, perhaps until the chief says, "Well, what do you think about it yourself?" In stating opinions the essentials are modesty and moderation.

Skill in Making Reports a Valuable Asset.—Many large concerns carry on their staffs regular investigators whose time is given almost wholly to special reports. One man on the staff of a giant electrical concern goes about investigating for the home office the conditions and special problems of subsidiaries and branches. He goes to South America, Europe, Australia, China, and all over the United States, bringing back outlines of facts which are complete and uncolored, and recommendations which

are definite, reasonable, and brief enough for the management to grasp readily. Every man above the rank of private may be called upon, sometime or other, for work of essentially the same sort, though generally on a smaller scale. It is wise to get ready.

The subordinate may often obtain valuable suggestions from the study of written reports, and from the examination of such books as "The Preparation of Reports" by Professor Baker of the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute,² or "Report Writing," already mentioned, by the chief report specialist of a great engineering firm in New York.³ Written reports are apt to be longer and more detailed than most oral reports, but the structural principles are the same. It is good training to take a good written report and turn it into an oral report, picking it to pieces, outlining the headings afresh, and filling in under each heading a single statement—two or three sentences which will express that point as it might be given in conversation. It is good also, once in a while, to write out in advance an oral report which you have to make to your chief, putting down just the words you expect to utter, and then go carefully over it to see whether you have found the best arrangement, distributed the space properly, and made the whole readily intelligible to the chief as you know him—and then tear it up.

Not long ago the superintendent of manufacturing of one of the great corporations of the world handed to an assistant, a man holding an important position and drawing a large salary, a file of papers relating to a certain matter and said, "Digest these for me, in as short a form as you can." The assistant worked three days and brought back two and a half pages of single-spaced typewriting. He had got it down to the lowest possible terms, he said. The chief said merely, "Give me the papers," took them home over Sunday, and Monday morning brought in ten lines written in pencil. "Isn't it all there?" he

² Ray Palmer Baker, *The Preparation of Reports*, The Ronald Press Company.

³ R. U. Fitting, *Report Writing*, The Ronald Press Company.

asked, and the younger man had to admit that it was. The incident was the immediate cause of the opening of a class in "higher English" in that office. The students were executives thirty-five to forty years of age, all college-bred, and all earning very substantial salaries. The management had realized that these highly responsible subordinates were not yet able to analyze and report upon in clear and concise form matters given them for investigation.

Suggestions and Requests.—Now and then something occurs to the subordinate outside the scope of what has been specifically entrusted to him, which he feels should be brought to the attention of his superiors. It may be something affecting his own duties or position—a request; or something otherwise related to the work of the organization—a suggestion. Such occasions come more frequently as the man advances in rank and responsibility.

As for requests, the rule of the sagacious man is, the fewer the better. Every request, outside of stipulated arrangements, is inevitably "charged against" the person who makes it. If granted, he is expected to make up for it by more work or distinctly better work. If refused, the fact of having applied may militate somewhat against his chances at some other time. When a man has a clear justification for a request he will nearly always be able to show that what he has in mind is not a personal indulgence, or an exception made for his convenience, but a natural application of the policy of the organization.

The same rule holds for suggestions. It is bad for a subordinate to acquire the name of a busybody. To be ready with a suggestion when it is asked for, but not to be forward about volunteering, is a sound policy. But to be ready means more than entertaining the idea; it means working it out into easily comprehended words. Further, suggestions come with a better grace when presented as the outgrowth of the policy of the organization, or of the chief himself.

Intelligent Cooperation with the Chief.—Unquestionably, though, occasions arise when suggestions ought to be volunteered. Any competent superior, however temperamental, desires in his subordinates not only deference but honesty of view and statement, independence, initiative. A subordinate in a responsible position, particularly if his relations with his superiors are personally close, is expected to keep his eyes open and give the management the benefit of his judgment. If he refrains from intrusion when not needed, his word has special weight when he does come forward. To keep to the middle way between officiousness and cooperation calls for sound and keen intelligence.

The assistant to the general manager of a large department store has this to say :

One-third of my time is spent in the interpretation of cryptic remarks of the general manager, and stepping them down to the minds and temperaments of the buyers.

The chief is very accurate and very fair. But he has a super-keen mind, a strong will, and quick, terse, impatient speech. He is so dynamic that when he does go wrong, or give the wrong suggestion, it causes a lot of trouble before it can be remedied. He needs someone to go over his orders and interpret them.

Clear Thinking.—The prime requisite of a subordinate's talk is good head-work. Every part of his duty calls for accuracy of thought; observation and analysis of the factors of a situation, selection of essential matter, logical arrangement, clarity of statement, and finally, tactful adaptation to the personality and ways of those to whom he reports. The superiors with whom any subordinate deals—anyone above the rank of junior employees like office-boys and messengers, stewards, waiters, and the like, who deal with any and all superiors as chance may require—are few in number. Each of them will have his individual peculiarities, limitations, inhibitions—his ways. The task of the man below is to present his message so that it will be quickly and satisfactorily grasped by these particular persons, and in return to be ready and successful in apprehending what they say to *him*. He

must be alert to catch their meaning, and to divine their intentions when from preoccupation or other cause they fail to make their meaning explicit.

Thus while tact and responsiveness are important in the talk of a subordinate as in all human relationships, the chief essential is good thinking. A subordinate is likely enough to be considerate of the man who has power over him. What he needs to bear in mind always is his own responsibility for accurate analysis of a case and logical statement of findings. He needs to learn ways of saying much in a few short sentences, ways of stating unpleasant but necessary truths in a manner which gives no offense. He has to deliver his messages to those whose time and attention are limited; he must not bore them or confuse them. The art of "composing" is of vital importance to his success. In the investigation mentioned in Chapter I more than half of the men and women who replied, representing 250 occupations, commented on the difficulties experienced in making reports to superior officers. Many of them stressed the matter of nervousness, or embarrassment, their lack of self-control when talking to "the boss," but most of them stressed the difficulties met with in arranging their ideas logically and finding the right words.

Two Types of Subordinate Relation.—There are two distinct types of relationship between subordinate and superior—leaving out of account the junior employees who in a sense are merely "messengers" having little individual responsibility. The first type is the understudy, such as the assistant buyer in a department store, or the assistant head of a producing department in a factory. Such a subordinate shares with his chief a definite, specialized duty. Presumably he is his chief's heir-apparent. The second relationship is that of the secretary, orderly, aide, or personal attendant. Such a subordinate is attached to an individual, is not, usually a "line officer," has no special knowledge of the business itself, is merely an extension of the personality

of the chief. The problem of communication varies with the two types of relationship.

The Secretary.—With the secretary, the main thing is to understand the ways and wishes of the chief, and to adapt everything to his convenience. The secretary is a mediator and interpreter between the chief and the outside world. Often a secretary comes to be almost the chief's "other self," to understand his affairs very nearly as well as he, and thus to be literally indispensable.

A most important part of the secretary's duty is the handling of delicate relationships. The secretary knows the inside situation. Problems involving quick and sure judgment arise continually. In handling telephone calls, visitors, or chance conversations, he often possesses closer knowledge of a matter which is highly important to his chief than the chief himself has at the moment. The secretary has the further responsibility of warding off a wrong move, and even, in a degree, of guiding the chief's action. In McNamara's "Secretarial Training,"⁴ or Kilduff's "Private Secretary,"⁵—the authors are men who have had experience both as secretaries and as executives—detailed analysis is given of the communication responsibilities.

Such relationships often come to be so close that the secretary appears to have no individual existence of his own, to be merged in the career of the chief. Actually, the two have become a team. The danger, with this relationship, is that the subordinate will lose his sense of proportion and his duty of keeping the chief informed as to actual facts. He is likely to come to see entirely through the chief's eyes, to be merely an accentuation of his superior's desires and power. When that occurs, he is likely to be no longer a truthful mirror of actual conditions for his chief. Another danger is that the secretary, knowing the chief's ways so intimately, weak points as well as strong points, and lacking a steadying sense of responsibility

⁴ Edward J. McNamara, *Secretarial Training*, The Ronald Press Company.

⁵ Edward J. Kilduff, *The Private Secretary*, Century Co.

toward the enterprise itself, may use his power with the chief unwisely.

The Assistant.—With the assistant or understudy the problem is very different. It is that of adjusting himself to the views and wishes of a man who is only a step ahead on the road he is himself traveling. The second in command in a department may have views as to its management which are widely at variance with those of the responsible chief. For the under man to yield gracefully and wholeheartedly to the views of his superior is a continual strain. The relationship may easily bring misunderstanding, jealousy, opposition. In the days of monarchy it was the regular thing for the heir to the throne to be in the Opposition party. A pathetic picture of the jealous feeling of an old king on his death-bed toward the son whom he believes to be estranged and hostile is given in Shakespeare's play of Henry IV, Part II, in the fourth scene of the fourth act. Such a situation is one of the utmost delicacy. The assistant's duty is to serve both the chief and the organization, to flag the chief's attention when divergence appears between policies the chief favors and those of the organization, yet not to interfere or put himself forward.

Benefits from Mastery of Communication Technique of Subordinate.—The communication responsibilities of a subordinate afford the best of discipline in sound, keen thinking and in tactful, clear, concise statement. In the upper positions they give excellent discipline also in adapting his own ideas and impulses to the personalities of the superiors with whom he deals. Finally, they afford opportunity for mental broadening and ripening, through thinking the chief's thoughts after him and learning his methods both of operation and of communication.

CHAPTER VI

SUPERIOR TO SUBORDINATE

Working Through Other People.—As a man advances in any line of activity, he comes into positions in which he has to direct the work of other people. In general, the wider the scope of a man's work and the more responsible, the more largely it has to be done through the energies of other persons. W. C. Clyde, President of the Carnegie Steel Company, in an address before the Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce, said of Andrew Carnegie:

When a subordinate was appointed to a position of manager, Mr. Carnegie maintained that the test of his ability was not what he did himself, but what he could get others to do in cooperating with him.

Being a good leader, getting subordinates to carry out satisfactorily the work which has to be done by them, is a much more exacting rôle than being a good subordinate, and the communication problem which it brings is far more complex and delicate than any the subordinate faces. The leader's problem is radically different in nature, not a question merely of clear thinking and logical statement, but one of emotional reactions, personalities, tact. The subordinate in his talk to the chief is not likely to forget to be tactful. But who is to remind the superior of the need for "watching his step"? It is only too easy for him to forget that along with the power to give orders goes the responsibility for getting them carried out successfully; that his own score depends after all on the support he receives from his followers, and this in turn upon his ability to reach and guide their minds.

Difficulties and Responsibilities.—Experienced executives in any line of endeavor will admit that the number of superiors

who secure full measure of cooperation and production from those they lead is small indeed. Successful leaders stand out among their fellows like Gulliver among the little Lilliputians. Today, when so much of society's activity is carried on in large units, and when even the tiny office of the professional man may handle work of far-reaching importance, this deficiency of leadership is a most serious matter. What are the necessary constituents of leadership we do not yet fully know, but one element, beyond question, is efficiency in communication of ideas and impulses.

The representative of a leading advertising agency recently remarked:

The consultant on advertising and selling problems . . . sees well-built plans fail through lack of shoulder-to-shoulder understanding between management and men. He sees poorly laid plans prove highly successful because of the dogged loyalty of salesmen to the executive who has the happy knack of enlisting their feelings as well as their minds.¹

The indictment lies not merely against the upper executives but all down the line, against foremen and minor supervisors as well, the sergeants and corporals of the army of industry. The way society's corporals handle their little groups is of enormous importance, because there are so many of them, and because it is they who embody the "organization" to the multitudes of individual workers. But the problem of relations with subordinates grows in difficulty the higher one climbs in the pyramid of organization. For the general manager, who has to consider at every moment how the directions and impulses he imparts to the department heads with whom his personal intercourse is held, are going to be transmitted to *their* subordinates, all the way down, it becomes tremendous.

Difficulties of the Relationship Itself.—Why is this problem of the superior so difficult? We are not here dealing with the personal limitations or defects of the individuals concerned. Chief and followers alike are of course human. The subordinate may

¹ Ray Giles, *Developing and Managing Salesmen*, The Ronald Press Company.

be bad-tempered, meddlesome, or uppish; ill-informed or stupid; erratic and scatter-brained; lazy; or merely passive. Similarly, the superior may be arrogant and inconsiderate. And he also may be lazy, stupid, erratic, bad-tempered, just as the subordinate is. Passing over these obvious misfits, however, there are difficulties in the relationship itself, which tend continually to breed trouble, however good the intentions of both parties and however expert each may be in the technique of his particular duties. They are difficulties of mutual understanding. If their existence is clearly recognized and allowed for, a good deal of the trouble disappears.

Possession of Power a Source of Difficulty.—The first of these difficulties of relationship arises from the fact that the subordinate is always more or less in the superior's power. This fact, we have seen, tends to make the under man afraid, and hence suspicious, touchy, and resentful. At least it tends to keep him from being frank and open with his chief. His impulse, if he disagrees with the chief's views or doubts the chief's competence, is to conceal his feelings, to lie low. Often the chief discovers too late that his plans have not been carried through as arranged but cannot find out who is responsible because his subordinates all "pass the buck." The tragi-comedy of the baffled teacher and the class of naughty boys is reenacted daily in thousands of adult workrooms and offices.

On the side of the superior this same fact of possessing power tempts him at any moment to arbitrariness and unwise positiveness of manner. Some of the best-natured men permit themselves a brusqueness or roughness with subordinates which would stir the old Adam in any subordinate who has spunk in him. Very often, if all the facts were known, when the superior thus "rides" his assistants, it is to work off his own resentment at rough treatment from *his* superiors. In the jolly old English comedy by Richard Brinsley Sheridan, "The Rivals," Captain Absolute, the hero, receives a terrific calling down from his father,

Sir Anthony, a testy old gentleman whose type is to be found here and there in modern days in the ranks of industry. The captain relieves his feelings by beating up his valet, Fag, and Fag in turn goes out and kicks the dog!

The management of one of the largest department stores in the world has found that one of the chief difficulties in the organization is the persistence of a bad old tradition that the proper manner for a department head—a buyer—in dealing with his subordinates is extreme roughness, the way of the slave-driver. "Over and over again," they say, "we have picked for buyer some young man who is naturally pleasant and friendly. But he has been trained under a buyer who operates by the old rough formula, or he has observed that this is the formula followed by many leading buyers. He deliberately sets about to assume it for himself with his own subordinates, and before long he is as bad as the old ones."

Misunderstanding from Difference of Range of View.—The most deep-seated cause of difficulty, however, in the superior's communication with subordinates is the difference in point of view, which results from the difference in scope and range of duties. The man below has only a narrow horizon. The man above has a wide horizon. Each tends constantly to forget this fundamental difference of view and thus to misunderstand the statements and the motives of the other. It would almost seem that the more fully devoted to his duty each one is, the stronger this tendency to misunderstanding of motive, the more prone each of them to think the other "unfair."

Preoccupation.—Trouble arises especially because of the leader's preoccupation. Engrossed with his larger interests he finds difficulty in adjusting himself readily to the detail question brought up by an assistant for whom that item is the big thing of the day. He appears unsympathetic or hostile, merely because he is thinking about something else. The subordinate goes away

resentful or suspicious, and there, perhaps, is the beginning of a serious breach. Or a superior who has to present to his staff something which he knows to be of prime importance, may be so preoccupied with his special troubles that he fails to take time to "sell" this matter to those below him, whose cooperation is indispensable. The subordinates fail to do their best; the desired result is not attained; and the leader thinks his men have lain down on the job.

Miscalculation of Time.—Failure to allow sufficient time for explaining to subordinates what is wanted, and—so far as they need to know—the reason why it is wanted, is one of the principal causes of ill-success in negotiations with those whom one must direct. The responsibility for mutual understanding rests of course with the superior. The initiative is his. Most of the conversation of a subordinate, we have seen, consists of reports in which he brings back the answer to some inquiry of the chief. As it is not etiquette for the under man to be too insistent in cross-examining his chief as to what is wanted, the superior must always go more than half way if full mutual comprehension is to be insured. The experienced executive learns to give plenty of time and thought to thinking out clearly just how to present matters so as to enable his subordinates to do their very best.

To make a dispassionate estimate of your own effectiveness in handling communication with subordinates will probably be both sobering and encouraging. The most helpful method is to work out a rating for yourself, not merely in comparison with a hundred per cent ideal efficiency, but in comparison with other persons in situations like your own. Run over in mind the names of ten men whose work is more or less parallel to yours—either in your own organization or outside—who have a reputation for reasonably satisfactory management, for getting work done and maintaining good morale. Set down a definite and rather detailed estimate or rating for each of them as to their handling of communication with subordinates—their strong and weak points—

the sort of estimate you would make if you were considering them as candidates for a position. Then set down a similar definite rating for yourself, looking at yourself fairly, in the light of your view of the other men.

Developing Technique for Oneself Not Easy.—All of us are more or less adjusted to the subordinate rôle, after a fashion, before we enter adult life; parents and teachers see to that. But no one teaches us how to bear ourselves toward those below us, when we begin to play the rôle of superior. We may be too “easy” and fail to get the work done, or we may follow the course of the young department store buyer and imitate the roughshod methods of some apparently successful “driver” of our acquaintance—perhaps one under whom we ourselves have suffered. This is the special danger of the lower executive, who has little real authority, who feels constantly the pressure for results from his own superiors, and who is himself dealing with subordinates who are relatively irresponsible and—he may feel—amenable only to the lash.

Many large organizations have worked out schemes of instruction for their foremen or supervisors; normal schools instruct the students whom they are fitting to be teachers in the method of dealing with pupils. But all these efforts are far too few. Some day society will contrive a systematic provision for training the corporals of its industrial army, and then its business will be facilitated. By the time men arrive at the upper positions the possibilities of large-scale mismanagement will be lessened.

Two Phases of Communication with Subordinates.—The superior's communication with subordinates comprises two distinct functions. He has to transmit orders and he has to see that the orders are carried out. The last duty involves supervision and that in turn involves, first, checking up the subordinates' record to see how well they have done and what has been committed to them, and second, stimulating and correcting them, so that they do their work better.

In both of these functions three things are important at all times: What the chief says or does not say; how he says it—his manner; how he listens.

Transmission of Orders.—This is a matter of clear explanation. In this first and simplest part of the superior's duty the training in logical analysis of a case, and of clear formulation, which is useful in a subordinate position, is once more useful.

In the first place, intelligent and suitable wording and grouping of words are required. The items to be given to subordinates must be suited to the person concerned and they should be no more than are needed. They should be arranged in an order which is easy to understand and which will suggest one meaning only. The executive is supposed to have his own thought clear; he must not pass along a puzzle to his subordinates.

The sentences should be short, quick, and definite. And they should be complete. In the intimacy between foreman and laborers, for instance, both parties are apt to talk in fragmentary, disjointed phrases. That tends to indefiniteness and to confusion.

The Wrong Way.—In connection with a certain contracting job, it is related, the instructions which the foreman was supposed to give to the men were transmitted to him in writing as follows:

Discontinue dumping surface dirt on the edge of Sand Pit Number 2. All refuse must be carried away to dump and deposited in accordance with previous instructions. Men are requested to follow this rule carefully and foremen are required to enforce it.

Here is the way in which those instructions were passed on by the foreman to the men.

Pit 2, don't dump, cart to dump, orders, see!

The result was confusion. The foreman spoke in a hurry, rushed away and left the men within range of his voice to figure out what he meant. Here is what happened. Some of the men

stopped taking sand from Pit Number 2. Others insisted that they were supposed to scoop sand and pile it up along the side of the pit. Others that they were to haul sand from the pit to the refuse dump; others that the sand pit was to be abandoned. All of the things referred to were attempted by the men until someone discovered the condition and reported it.

Had the foreman transmitted his orders in terms as definite as those in which they reached him, but simplified to suit the powers of comprehension of the laborers, he would have saved his own time and that of the men; he would have prevented loss to the company; and the instructions intended would have been carried out. Suppose that, translating the instructions into the habitual language of the laborers addressed, he had said something like this:

Hey John! Big boss says don't dump top dirt round Pit 2. Haul top dirt to creek scrap pile. If you don't do as I say, I'll whale tar out of you!

That would have been perfectly clear for the unskilled foreign workmen to whom he was talking. It is rough because addressed to rough men, but it is good-natured and human.

The Trouble Began "Higher Up."—But the foreman was not the chief offender in this case. The trouble originated with the wording of the order as transmitted to him—specifically with the use of the word "dump" in two senses. The superior who drew up or authorized that order was negligent in failing to foresee the confusion that might result when the order should be relayed by foreman to laborers.

It is an exceedingly common fault of business executives, as it is of foremen, teachers, and parents, when giving orders, to stop short of explaining what is wanted. As in the case just cited, they take too much for granted. They fail to allow, besides, not only for the subordinate's difficulties of comprehension but for his "forgettory."

Supervision—The Art of Listening.—Transmission of orders, though, is only the beginning. The superior must make sure that these orders are carried out. He must somehow induce the horse to drink.

For success at this point the superior needs to know how to listen. This need becomes imperative in the second and all-important phase of supervision, that of keeping the subordinates up to their work, stimulating them to work better. Fortunate is the chief who can imbue his assistants, by the way in which he listens, with the feeling that he respects their efforts, even if the results do not fully meet requirements.

In this connection, many business superiors might profitably study the practice of experienced teachers with pupils. A certain sales-manager, feeling that his men needed the stimulus of a new attack on their particular problem, engaged an outside expert on the particular work desired, and spent much time with him in planning a course of experiment and training for the men. The men, after some first timidity, took hold of the assignments cheerfully and carried them out as well as they could. But their first efforts were of course far below the standard the manager had set in his own mind as the goal to be reached. He forgot that this was only the beginning, and that the poor efforts he observed were really quite an achievement as showing honest effort. Instead of listening sympathetically, as the experienced teacher does, he ridiculed and scolded them for not coming nearer the ideal. The inevitable result was that they were ashamed and frightened and stopped work, and the costly effort was wasted.

Making Allowances.—A selling organization of national scope recently found that it was necessary for their sales force—about 60 men located in all parts of the country—to memorize and learn to deliver effectively an extended sales canvass. The management took the utmost care and patience. Early in the summer they furnished each salesman with a copy, with instructions as to what was to be learned, and the definite date when they would

be required to know it. In August they brought the salesmen together for two weeks in comfortable and roomy quarters in a suburb near the home office, and set about helping each man to perfect his knowledge of the substance of the talk. Then they employed a man who had knowledge both of public speech and of business to go over the canvass in detail with the men, so that each was enabled to develop an attitude toward the canvass which was essentially that of a skilled actor toward his rôle.

Particularly, when the subordinate's work is of a nature requiring intense or long-sustained effort—working out accounts or records, selling goods, making up an exacting report—the chief needs to bear in mind that the result submitted to him means a great deal to the subordinate. However inadequate, it probably represents the best the subordinate can do at that time. If the chief fails to appear interested, or if he takes an attitude of suspicion, intimating that he thinks the subordinate has been loafing or bluffing, he is likely to spoil all chance of improvement.

Disciplining.—Even if there has been bluffing or faking, one effective way to eradicate them is for the chief to accept the report—seemingly—at its face value, and then proceed to discover its errors or inconsistencies as if by accident, and quite without blaming the subordinate. This was the way of an experienced teacher with students who had evidently “cribbed” their papers. The cribber was not sure whether or not the teacher had been fooled as to authorship but he discovered that the teacher passed nothing without close examination, and he was not humiliated by being treated as a crook. Generally the culprits tried to live up to the conception they thought the teacher might have of them and next time presented papers that showed honest work. In catching and rejecting poor work the wise superior knows how to avoid wounding the subordinate's self-respect; for self-respect is the most important element in the assistant's power of accomplishing the work the chief must get done. And though reproof may have to be sharp and decided, at times, it can always be impersonal.

Don't Rub It In.—Above all a superior must beware of scolding too long. The temptation to "rub it in" is sometimes tremendous, particularly when the chief is himself carrying a nerve-racking strain. But when the chief talks too long or too loudly, the under man is sure to think the "boss" has lost his temper. Then his sense of guilt departs and with it his shame, and the benefit of the reproof is lost.

A certain young executive, carrying single-handed a complicated business through seas that were stormy, got into trouble with his entire staff through this very cause. He was himself exceptionally quick of perception and of speech and had a sudden temper that blew off, any moment, in rough words. He bore no malice; he was a man of distinctly kind heart; the minute the storm was over he could go ahead serenely with the subordinate he had just been lambasting, as if nothing had happened. But the subordinates were slower in reaction. They could not understand him. They were abashed by his preternatural quickness, and were only too ready to pick upon errors of judgment that he—like all quick persons—was prone to make. In time there resulted a spirit of sullen hostility that came near wrecking the factory. Fortunately, as the chief was big enough to discover the trouble—or perhaps someone told him of it—and to alter radically his mode of operation, the situation gradually straightened out. The problem of due allowance, on the part of a quick-thinking and quick-acting superior, for the slower wit and slower pace generally of those who must do the work by which he will succeed or fail, was an old one when Columbus sailed from Spain. It comes near to the heart of the whole problem of the dealings of superior with subordinate.

Kipling on Leadership.—Years ago Rudyard Kipling put into simple terms the essentials of the philosophy of leadership, in a little poem in cockney dialect entitled "The 'Eathen," in which he pictures a "color-sergeant"—or as Americans would say, "top-sergeant"—in the old English army:

'E learns to do 'is watchin' without it showin' plain;
'E learns to save a dummy, an' shove 'im straigh't again;
'E learns to check a ranker that's buyin' leave to shirk;
An' 'e learns to make men like 'im so they'll learn to like their work.

An' when it comes to marchin' he'll see their socks are right,
An' when it comes to action 'e shows 'em how to fight;
'E knows their ways of thinkin' and just what's in their mind;
'E knows when they are takin' on an' when they've fell behind.

General Lincoln C. Andrews, of the United States Army, has expressed in his suggestive little book on "Military Man-Power," the same sagacious technique of management, developed through ages of army experience.²

The essential in the dealings of superior with subordinate is not logic but psychology. Says one successful executive—"The sales manager is a teacher. His most important task is keeping his men in line—stimulus—inspiration." It has to be accomplished for the most part by incidental, delicate, almost casual touches. Preaching, solemnity, sentimentality are fatal.

Words and Manner.—It has been said of the superior's talk to those beneath him: "It is not what you say but how you say it that matters." Of course that is only a half-truth. Actually the words matter very greatly. To find on the instant words that mean just what you want to say—hearty and kindly, brief and simple, and appropriate to the man addressed—is tremendously important. It is true, though, that manner counts more than words. Because of the relative positions of subordinate and chief, the under man is always prone to read between the lines, to try to go behind the statement to its inner significance. He notes with ultra-sensitiveness the correspondence between words and manner. If the manner rings true he can put up with inept words, but if the manner is wrong he does not give his confidence.

The chief must therefore at all costs free the minds of his assistants from suspicion and convince them that he is "on the

² Lincoln C. Andrews, *Military Man-Power*, Dutton & Co.

level." In this his manner and voice are his most valuable resources. Sure command of words and their arrangement is for most of us not easy. As is shown in detail in Chapters XXXI and XXXII, improvement in these points comes slowly and gradually. But heartiness and friendliness of manner and voice largely make up for inadequacies of language, and as to these improvement can be gained rapidly. Here the suggestions of Chapters XXXIII-XXXV will be found useful. If it was worth while for army officers to receive voice training so that they could give orders effectively to troops, is it not worth while for the executive who has to persuade good work out of his business subordinates—many or few—to get all the coaching he can in making his manner and voice as useful as possible?

Going More Than Half Way.—The chief must be genuinely interested in his subordinates as individuals. The football coaches who get most out of their squads *live* with their men. Successful sales managers are apt to have their desks out among their salesmen. The time lost from trifling interruptions is more than made up in the feeling of comradeship thus developed.

He must expect to go more than half way, always, in negotiations with those under him. They may be presumed to have less maturity and breadth of view than he, and are likely to lose their poise. They cannot realize his responsibilities, the limitations upon his freedom of action, his need of being absolutely impartial, and other restraints. If he expects fifty-fifty cooperation he will be disappointed. Yet he must keep on giving. In the Bible phrase, virtue must go out of him continually. He has to expect constantly, and make allowance for, what seem to him misunderstanding and ingratitude, growing out of the fact that their range of view is less than his own. He has to keep on explaining cheerfully and dynamically what he has explained many times before. Making allowances for the limitations of subordinates involves easing them along, telling them enough yet not too much.

The wise superior will overlook a good deal. He will see things, often, without speaking of them. He will keep his face, will retain cool self-control, will not let subordinates see that he is fussed. Above all, he will not be guilty of soliloquizing. Yet he will not be a machine; he will be human. The wise leader may find it useful, indeed, to stage a little explosion now and then, about a matter which is not of serious importance.

Three Types of Subordinates.—The superior deals with three types of subordinates. There are the miscellaneous subordinates of minor rank. With these it is mainly a question of showing consideration, letting them see that he thinks of them as individuals, not as "hands." To do this, of course, in a big organization is not easy. It calls for ready command of the small change of conversation.

There are his immediate assistants, lieutenants, understudies. As to these the task is to give instruction and stimulus while respecting the subordinate's personality and knowledge. He will find the task easier if he is careful always to stress the impersonal office status, the fact that both parties are subject to the rule of the organization. The under man will accept that tone; it does not irritate his own dignity.

Finally, there are the chief's secretaries and close personal subordinates. Here the task is hardest. He has to be intimate with these people and trust them with responsibilities, without being indulgent and without yielding to flattery. Above all, he must not yield to the temptation to put upon them the responsibilities which are properly his own.

His talk with higher subordinates will make constant draft upon his skill in words and in arrangement of ideas. The more fully he can master such control of language, to supplement his control of manner and voice, the smoother will be his course.

Responsibility for the Attitude of Others.—As subordinate to superior you are playing your own hand, however you may

think you are limited and controlled by the chief. As superior to subordinate you are playing not only your own hand but the subordinate's hand, and that of the organization also. You have the responsibility of persuading the subordinate to function as the organization desires. And you cannot use force. While the subordinate thinks that you can use it, you know well that you cannot afford to do so, because force defeats its own end and kills the chance of getting the subordinate to put his own interest and will into his work.

The wise parent lets a child do things "to help," though it does them clumsily. The child is learning how, gaining self-respect and developing the feeling of responsibility. The *chief* in business life is in a similar relation to his subordinates.

How Not to Do It.—Years ago in the Russia of the Czars, the Russian admiral in the harbor of Vladivostock gave a reception on his flagship to some members of the British Parliament, to impress them with the dignity of the Empire. The crowning point was the exhibition of a new rapid-fire gun with beautiful, delicate brass mounting. Just at the moment of firing something stuck, as they say it was apt to do in the old Russian navy, and the gun would not work. The commander of the flagship turned white; the admiral turned blue. The gun-crew pattered about helplessly. Then sharp orders were given, and a lieutenant took a hammer and pounded the delicate mechanism out of shape till the charge went off, after a fashion. But the gun was ruined.

How to Do It.—On the other hand, in a certain business organization of moderate size, the sort where responsibilities are more burdensome and worrying than in the big concerns because each man is carrying more than one task, it became necessary to bring together the department heads for a three days' conference on a production plan. The situation which had to be met was complex and the making out of a satisfactory plan called for patient, concentrated effort by all concerned. The strain

began to tell upon everybody's patience and temper, including the chief's. Men were getting nervous, their voices edgy, and mean little personalities began to fly about. The chief, however, kept his head. Every now and then he left the room to answer a telephone call, or on some other "errand," returning each time serene and good-natured to quiet the rising billows and restore the atmosphere of friendly cooperation.

The dangers of the superior's talk with subordinates are: first, talking too little—peremptoriness; second, talking too much—garrulousness, or haranguing; third, talking irresponsibly, or whimsically—soliloquizing—confusing subordinates by discussing matters not in their province. The rewards of the leader are: first, accomplishing his purposes through the work of his subordinates; second, satisfaction of the creative impulse, through setting in motion the powers of other people and enabling *them* to create.

Mr. Clyde says, confirming the judgment of many another observer, that Andrew Carnegie's success was based in large measure upon his power of finding, developing, and holding young men of ability and force. It would be deeply interesting if we could know in some detail how he *talked* to these men.

CHAPTER VII

CONFERENCES

A New Type of Contact—A New Technique.—The principles of communication between subordinate and superior were worked out ages ago. Today it is a question merely of restating them in terms of our own age. The large-scale enterprises of our century, however, have brought extensive development of the relationship between persons of equal rank and independent authority within an organization, and this has developed a form of communication little known in former times. In large organizations matters come up continually which require consultation among those in charge of diverse lines of activity, in order that differences may be adjusted and policy determined. To such a meeting the term "conference" is generally applied. The conference relationship concerns only a small proportion of those engaged in any enterprise, the officers, department heads, and others carrying a measure of authority or responsibility. The problems are difficult, however, and the technique is new.

Negotiation Among Equals.—The special difficulty in connection with a conference comes from the fact that it involves negotiation and agreement among persons of equal standing, none of whom has any special right of initiative or final power of decision. On a small scale, it is the problem of parliamentary government.

There have been conferences, of course, wherever an enterprise has been carried on by partners. Wherever the undertaking was extensive, so that the attention of the partners had to be divided, conferences became important. With the development of overseas trading in seventeenth century in England there must

have been conferences among the investors—"undertakers" as they were called—engaging in a mercantile venture. So, in earlier days, with the merchants of the Hansa towns of the North German coast; the bankers and traders of Lombardy and Venice; the trading houses of the Roman Empire, Carthage, Tyre, Crete, Egypt. The present discussion applies in some degree to such conferences of partners, the technique of which remains much the same through the ages.

Routine and Special Conferences.—The type of conference with which we are chiefly concerned, however, is that between employees to whom some degree of management responsibility has been delegated—when, for example, the heads of two or more departments have to get together to decide some point of procedure, or to lay out some plan which affects the departmental work of all of them. Some conferences are of a periodic character, the same group of persons meeting at regular intervals to go over matters more or less routine in nature. In such conferences the technique of periodic reports has considerable application. Generally, however, the matters which necessitate conferences are special, and the persons concerned are not accustomed to coming together in such a way. It is in these special conferences that the difficulties of the situation are particularly noticeable. Here, it may be observed, the technique of special reports is more or less applicable.

The number of persons engaged may range from two to a dozen or more. When there are only two the situation is comparatively simple. The trouble begins when three or more are engaged. When the number runs much over a dozen the affair usually takes on the nature of a "public meeting" and the communication is no longer conversation but public speaking.

A Difficult Type of Situation.—The purpose of a conference is to look into some matter which is wider in its ramifications, or more complex, than can be handled satisfactorily by one per-

son or one department, and to achieve agreement upon the wisest course at a minimum cost in time and friction. Full success involves not only a right decision but getting the business done without delay and without stirring irritation. Judged by these requirements, the ordinary conference leaves much to be desired.

Difficulties Reported.—In the investigation into the use of language in daily life referred to in Chapter I, it is significant that more difficulty was reported in connection with conferences than in connection with any other form of business interview. Where the questions regarding reports to superiors, instructions to subordinates, and conferences were answered by the same person, the relative difficulty of conference communication appeared still more plainly. One explanation, perhaps, is this: In communication between subordinate and superior or superior and subordinate the difficulties are often not clearly realized by men of the successful and practical type from whom most of the replies to the questionnaire came. On the other hand, in communication between equals, whatever difficulties develop are plain on the surface, to be realized by everyone. When a man gives an order to his assistants the fact of poor transmission of thought may not appear for a long time, whereas in conference with equals any error in transmission shows up at once.

Following are typical confessions brought out by the investigation:

From a flour miller in the West, thirty years old: "Fully half the time of every conference is wasted on trifles and lengthy, positive talk."

A teacher in an Eastern seaport, forty years old: "The point is seldom reached, because members of the group indulge in trivialities and personalities."

An insurance man, thirty-five years old, in the Middle West: "We waste time in unnecessary talk at the beginning, slighting important matters toward the end."

A dentist, forty years old, in Pennsylvania: "I cannot wait till others have finished, thinking they will forget something."

A proofreader, twenty-five years old, in New England: "Difficult

to make the business in hand move forward briskly without interrupting people or appearing too officious and overconfident of my own opinion."

A high school teacher, forty-five years old, in New England: "Many difficulties. One difficulty is to say all that one has to say in one speech, anticipating the progress of the discussion."

A housewife, thirty-five years old, in a suburb of New York: "Constructive ideas which evolve from a hint here or there are often difficult to frame on first trial and need restatement by group thought."

An engineer, thirty years old, in Chicago: "Difficult to have thinking orderly when trying to be brief—sacrificing clearness through omitting details which, although clear to *me*, need to be explained in order that listeners may have continuity of thought."

A teacher, thirty-five years old, in an upstate New York town: "Many times after ten or fifteen minutes' discussion we find that because of the inadequacy of our words we have not been in total disagreement but only in a slight degree at variance."

A director of research for a business house in Massachusetts: "Difficulty of being overenthusiastic, which borders very closely on dogmatism."

A physician, fifty-five years old, in Kansas: "Difficulty arises from the comparatively untrained minds whose owners must talk themselves into some semblance of clarity before any real business can be accomplished."

The following statements are particularly significant. The first suggests that its writer, though over sixty years old, and the division superintendent of a comfortably established service organization largely unaffected by the ups and downs of business chances, has but imperfectly realized the purposes of a conference or the responsibilities of those concerned in it. In the work of his organization, it might appear, the conference has not become a necessity of operation.

No difficulty. I attend directors' meetings every week and say very little; allow others to do the talking except when I wish to have my own ideas put on the record.

The second, from the operating head of a large manufacturing concern engaged in a highly competitive line, sharply affected by changes in fashions, places a very different estimate upon the

difficulties of the conference situation. The statement is from a man who is a keen student of business, and widely experienced.

Have not mastered this problem, one of the most difficult and to my mind the most important in the business world.

What would be your own answers to the questions asked of these people: (1) Do you find the handling of conference discussion difficult? (2) Just what are the difficulties you experience?

Waste of Time—Friction—Wrong Emphasis.—The difficulties specified in these replies just quoted may be grouped under three heads: waste of time; unnecessary friction; inability to find the right course—going off on a tangent, or stressing minor points.

Such difficulties result partly, no doubt, from the general low level of efficiency in communication already noted in other relations. The main cause would seem to be imperfect comprehension of the nature of conference subject-matter and of the situation and mood of the persons participating and failure to adjust communication procedure to these facts.

Problems of Subject-Matter.—As to the subject-matter. Conferences have to do with settling disputed points, or determining plans or policy. This involves cooperative thinking on the part of two or more persons not closely related in their daily work, which is a difficult process at best. This effort to think a matter through harmoniously is made more difficult by the fact that in many cases opinions are already formed. The fact that a conference has to be called, implies the existence of difference of opinion, or at least uncertainty of mind, and that in turn implies actual or potential friction. Finally, any matter important enough to make a conference necessary is pretty sure to have complexities which make its presentation in a brief space very difficult. Hence there is nearly always pressure for time,

and a tendency to hurry which in turn hinders clearness of thought and considerateness of attitude. It is to be remembered, further, that the conference time nearly always has to come out of that allowed for regular work, and hence is begrudged by all concerned.

That is to say, the nature of the subject-matter predisposes all hands to confusion and friction.

Problems of Relationships—Department versus Organization.—Then there are features of the relationship of the conferees to the topic in hand and to each other, which accentuate the difficulty of swift and smooth and wise agreement.

There is often a clash of departmental responsibility with organization responsibility. The conferees are virtually of equal rank and authority in the meeting but they are of different departments. Now in a large organization very few of the staff—even of the upper executives—are accustomed to think in terms of the whole organization. A man thinks of himself as belonging to the delivery department, the sales department, the accounting department. Each of the conferees is likely to share the views, attitudes, and range of information of his departmental associates. He is likely to have an exaggerated sense of his departmental dignity and duty, to be a little suspicious of the views and conduct of the representatives of other departments, and hence in conference discussion, he is likely to take an attitude that is critical or negative, instead of being constructive and cooperative. If there are old bones of contention between the departments—and this is often the case—they are likely to come to the surface when discussion grows warm, diverting attention from the subject in hand and provoking personal hostility.

Personal Weaknesses.—In a discussion within a department, though there may be provocation and sore points, there is always the sense of departmental solidarity and authority, which acts to keep conflicting opinions within bounds. There is also the habit-

ual communication technique which each one uses with department subordinates and superiors. In conference it occurs very often that persons who within the department are prudent and tactful seem to forget their technique of intercourse, and act upon impulse, as if inexperienced or unschooled.

As the members of a conference group are theoretically on a level, no one is charged with the special duty or has the special right of taking the initiative. If a zealous but untactful conferee pushes too hard, he is likely to ruffle departmental dignity and stir opposition for what he urges. In addition, as the conferees are not constant associates, there is very often an impulse to show off which is unknown in regular departmental discussions. This impulse to show off is one of the most serious hindrances to successful conference communication.

Finally, the fact that the occasion is outside department routine appears often to lessen the businesslike mood in many conferees, to prompt a feeling, indeed, that the conference is a sort of "party." The feeling that somehow "George" will attend to the matter may lessen the sense of responsibility to the organization and lead all concerned to trifle.

Forgetting Organization Dignity.—A man who had an appointment with the personnel manager of a large retail store, arrived on the moment and was directed to the executive's outer office. Seated round the walls of the bare little room were four or five young girls, stock-girls perhaps, listening with sly grins to a vigorous discussion of store policy that was going on in the inner office, the door of which was partly open. The caller sat down and waited, five minutes, ten minutes, twenty-five minutes. The discussion inside waxed warmer. Then three men appeared in the doorway, talking and gesticulating vehemently, and slowly revolved through the outer office, oblivious to the spectators—it was somewhat like the slow gyration of the combatants in the duel scene in "Cyrano"—till they reached the hall door. Though not ill-tempered the discussion was anything but dignified. One

little girl asked eagerly as they passed her, "Say! What's the row?" and one of the men gave her a good-natured grin. Finally two of the debaters departed, and the third, the personnel manager, as it proved, turned back, wiped his face with his handkerchief, flushed a little as he caught sight of the stranger, and with a phrase of apology ushered him into the inner office. That conference had occupied at least a half-hour of the time of three major executives, in front of a group of tittering employees.

You might find it very much worth while to make a quiet survey of your own organization with respect to its management of conferences, noting to what extent such difficulties as have been enumerated in the preceding pages are in evidence. A cool and detached appraisal, as if from the point of view of an outsider, often leads to the recognition and remedy of errors or slackness in practice whose existence had not been suspected.

Little Training in Conference Technique.—The difficulties growing out of the nature of the subject-matter and the attitude and mood of the conferees are aggravated by the fact that any training in conference communication is exceedingly rare. Everyone is drilled for long years, after some sort of fashion, in the technique of the subordinate. Everyone in the position of superior finds himself compelled to consider the technique of communication with those below him. But conference communication is something for which no instructions whatever are given, and the occasions for it do not come frequently enough with most persons to force the development of the special technique it requires. Most persons, accordingly, "go it blind." They have only the resources of general good sense to guide them in a procedure which is strange, and to guard them against the provocations to inter-departmental friction, and impulses to personal irresponsibility.

Is it any wonder that conferences often fall short in efficiency, that they are regarded by many clear-sighted persons as merely "occasions for passing the buck"?

Conferences Indispensable—Points of Procedure.—Nevertheless, conferences are an indispensable feature of all cooperative undertakings, as necessary in large business organizations as diplomatic negotiations between governments. Indeed, they are of the same nature. Where questions of policy and management are too extensive for any one department to determine, the common knowledge and judgment of the organization must be called upon to minimize the difficulties of the conference situation and to increase its efficiency. Certain points of procedure have been found useful.

The Matter of Time.—First of all is the matter of time. Conferences should not be called when a question can be settled otherwise. Conference machinery is relatively expensive. When one-man decisions will suffice they should be used. When, however, a conference is necessary, ample time should be allowed.

It must be borne in mind that conferences call for a spirit of cooperation, a general sense of responsibility to the organization. In most organizations, whether industrial or social, this is a thing of recent growth. The ingrained attitude of the subordinate—carrying no personal responsibility except to the chief or that of the superior—carrying *all* responsibility—are alike contrary to the sense of diffused and mutual responsibility and of the need of cooperative action. Therefore it is to be expected that operation by means of conferences and negotiations will be less immediately efficient than the long-established and recognized operation by means of command. The difficulty is that of any “bloomin’ republic,” in Kipling’s phrase. Two or more parties of equal authority must find a way to come together; the “easy way” of force will not work. Nevertheless, certain features of both subordinate and superior technique can be applied to great advantage in a conference.

Time Necessary for a Meeting of Minds.—It should be borne in mind, also, that one large object of conference dealings

is the development of a common understanding of a situation. Swiftmess of decision and action is hardly to be expected; as to this element a conference is definitely inferior to one-man command. But the conference at its best can develop a general agreement of purpose which gives greater energy than the orders of any czar. Such unity of purpose, however, comes only from entire common understanding of a situation, and this, in turn, takes time.

Congress—like every parliamentary body—“wastes” a vast amount of time. Yet it is indispensable to have important matters deliberated, until everybody concerned has full realization of what is involved. There is always some Tom Reed in Congress or any other such organization, who is bent on getting action. But the wisest heads know the importance of “giving them time.”

In the process, of course, some time will be actually wasted. That is inevitable. The natural human tendency to chatter and “visit” must be allowed for. Most men will waste time in side issues and irrelevancies. The kite must have a tail. It would not be human for average men to come together—most of them tense from their immediate responsibilities—and at once slip smoothly into a “meeting of minds.” In particular, it is difficult for persons who at other times are functioning definitely as superiors or subordinates to adjust themselves quickly to the conference mood. Perhaps it is the normal course that four-fifths of any conference period will pass in preliminary and incidental chat, in random sparring, and so on, that fifty minutes of an hour’s conference will be thus spent upon what is apparently preliminary or incidental matter, so that the business has to be done in ten minutes. The preliminary period is probably a necessary time of relaxing, and harmonizing. What can be done in the last ten minutes could not have been done in the first ten. It is necessary for the gas to be blown off, for everyone to have got round to the “same side of the table.”

On the other hand, no more time should be consumed than is necessary. It is always possible for the orchestra to get into

tune more quickly, if the players understand their duties and try to concentrate upon their common task. Here is one most important line of improvement in the management of conference communication. The individual can expedite proceedings by putting his own mind and attention in order before the meeting begins. It may be remarked, also, that at least it is possible for each member of the group to be prompt in arriving when a meeting hour is agreed upon.

Free Discussion and Constructive Counsel.—The atmosphere should be one of free and open discussion, with no disposition on the part of anyone to dominate the situation. You cannot have a successful conference with a string to it. The decision must not be cut-and-dried, or there will be no contribution of constructive ideas and impulses, which is what it is intended to call out. There must be fairness and openness of mind; only in this way is it possible to get all the conferees attuned, so that they will really cooperate. Then ideas can flow back and forth without hindrance from petty suspicions, jealousies, or difference of background.

Further, the spirit must be one of constructive counsel, not of argumentative debate. Parliamentary procedure is out of place in conference. In a debate each of the speakers seeks to make his own view win. In a conference each tries to help the others make the most of *their* views if these are intrinsically useful. This matter is well set forth in a little book by Professor Sheffield of Wellesley, which is deserving of careful study by all who participate in conferences.¹ Another book which should be at hand is "Conferences, Committees and Conventions," by a man who has had extensive and varied personal experience as secretary of governmental and semi-public commissions.² The author has set down many practical suggestions, and has given the programs of a number of actual meetings.

¹ Alfred D. Sheffield, *Joining in Public Discussion*, Doubleday-Doran Co.

² Edward Eyre Hunt, *Conferences, Committees, Conventions and How to Run Them*, Harper & Bros.

Preliminary Thinking—A Program.—On the other hand, merely dumping the conference business on the table will not bring constructive results. There has to be preparation, preliminary thinking, a program, on the part of some individuals if not of all. There has to be constant effort during the conference to steer toward some definite conclusion. Lacking something of the sort, the conference is pretty sure to drift, with the result of wasted time, irrelevant gossip, quarrels and haphazard decisions.

Recently some thirty persons gathered in Washington for a conference on a matter relating to industry. They were a group of experts, competent to "take the subject apart and put it together again." Nevertheless, the conference was a failure. Through somebody's oversight, no preparation had been made. No preliminary explanation had been issued as to just what was desired. The chairman merely dumped the subject on the table without analysis. As the room was big and ill-arranged, the conferees had difficulty in hearing one another. The hours of the day were wasted in trivialities and side-issues.

Conference Requisites—A Clear Opening Statement.—To insure wise approach to the subject, and a helpful mood, it is helpful to bear in mind the following points:

First, at the beginning of the meeting there may well be a clear and sufficient statement of the case, by one who has prepared it. The logical person to do this is the one at whose particular instance the conference has been called. He can give briefly and pointedly the "origin of the case," what are the issues, why those present have been called upon, and in general terms what lines of action are possible. This statement should be short and simple; it is only too easy for one who has been thinking about the matter to talk over the heads of the others. It must be in a mood and in terms that are fair, and not too positive; any evidence of heat or personal animus at this point will stir hostility at once.

Recently The Society for Promotion of Engineering Education presented to a large gathering of college presidents and deans

a comprehensive plan for a new educational policy. The delegates met first in an evening dinner session, at which the general purpose of the meeting was set forth in a brief but comprehensive address by the chairman. This session was adjourned at nine o'clock, and every delegate was given a detailed printed statement of the matters to be considered, with the request to look it over privately before going to bed. When the business sessions began, next morning, everyone was in a position to enter with clear intelligence upon the discussion of essentials.

It may be noted that in the preliminary set-up of a conference and in framing the opening statement the training received as a subordinate in formulating cases for the chief again becomes useful.

Emphasis on Mutual Responsibility and Need.—Second, in the conduct of the discussion definite emphasis should be laid on the idea of responsibility to the organization as a whole, and the mutual interest of all the departments or individuals concerned in reaching a satisfactory settlement of the points under consideration. Some definite and explicit effort of this sort is necessary in order to counteract the purely departmental view which results from each man's absorption in his daily duties.

Good Humor.—Third, a spirit of good humor. Seriousness does not mean solemnity. Personalities are apt to come up, particularly if the men are preoccupied with their own duties. While few men deliberately want to make trouble, most men are by nature somewhat careless and clumsy; they get in each other's way. Time is often wasted through misplaced "senatorial courtesy"—each individual waiting for the others. Deft good humor on the part of one or two of the company will usually blow these clouds away.

Quick Thinking an Essential.—Fourth, quick thinking. This manifests itself especially in readiness to recognize and assist in developing the buds of constructive ideas, which, as pointed out

in one of the questionnaire responses quoted above, "evolve from a hint here and there." Often a suggestion that is pertinent and perhaps highly important is couched at first in quite inadequate form, so that most of the conferees fail to recognize its significance. If one member of the group can take it up and explain it, he may be greatly expediting the business of the conference.

Alertness and Tact.—Fifth, related to this is the need of alertness and tact in heading off digressions and personalities, and dexterity in bringing discussion back to the point. Here the training obtained in the handling of subordinates is directly useful. The man who has learned how to let his subordinates free their minds in their departmental dealings with him; how to listen with patience while they talk on subjects that mean much to them, even though in his larger view unimportant; how to bring to them a new aspect of a matter without patronizing and how to suggest a line of action without commanding, can do the same thing with his associates in a conference.

Perhaps the most serious problem is that of the well-intentioned but temperamental conferee who lacks self-control and cannot stand constraint from outside. When such a one takes the bit in his teeth and insists on talking off the subject, while the others manifestly grow impatient and resentful, the problem of diverting his attention and leading him back to the main road calls for the utmost versatility and tact. Here again the technique of handling subordinates comes into play. You cannot head off a tirade unless you pay attention. If you listen closely and in an attitude of respect, you can generally find a place somewhere to break in, and if you are ready enough in thought you can generally lead the talk back to the point.

Too often the difficulty is that department heads who are consistently tactful in handling subordinates are prone to be thoughtless and hasty when they get into a conference with their peers. This is one of the weaknesses of our general attitude toward communication; of our failure to carry over a skill acquired in one

relation into others where it could be equally useful if wisely applied.

Ready Command of Language.—Sixth, ready command of the devices of language, so as to be able to express ideas in terms that are intelligible to the differing minds and personalities represented, is important at all times. The controversies that take time, in conferences as elsewhere, are very largely misunderstandings as to *words*. As noted in one of the questionnaire responses cited above, a group will often discover, after long controversy, that they all have in mind substantially the same thing, but have been quarreling over different understandings of the words used.

What the Individual Can Do—Prepare.—The points listed above are of importance for every participant in a conference, whether he has a program to urge or has merely a secondary interest in the decision. If a man finds himself in a situation where he needs to put through a plan, the following suggestions may be borne in mind in guiding his procedure.

He should, of course, prepare in advance. Whether or not he is to make the opening statement he should study the case before the conference meets. Sometimes this is impossible, but those exceptions are rare; generally each man concerned knows something of the history of the case—he needs only to refresh his memory—and something of the immediate occasion for the conference. Fifteen minutes spent beforehand in reviewing the situation will often save much more time after the conference opens. It will keep the man himself from delaying progress while someone tells him these things; it will clarify his own view so that he can listen more intelligently to the views of others; it will put him in a situation where he can at need head off others of the group from irrelevancies.

If possible, he should also get the significant facts into the minds of the others of the group before the conference assembles. A prominent real estate man was given the job of selling a site

on the Pennsylvania Railroad to one of the largest of American manufacturing organizations, which was looking for a place near New York. During the few days before the conference at which the decision was to be made, the real estate man contrived to see every one of the company executives who were to take part in the conference, and put before each of them unobtrusively the fact of the unusual facilities of the Pennsylvania Railroad for handling the freight needs of a large-scale industrial plant. When the conference opened, the promoter had little to do beyond revealing the fact that the location he recommended was on the Pennsylvania.

Do Not Speak Too Soon.—When the conference meets, he should not obtrude his own view too early in the discussion; he should let the others talk first. He will contrive to bring them back to the point by deft but quiet suggestions; as opportunity offers, he may bring up objections to the views they urge, keeping his manner unobtrusive and impersonal; but he will be wise if he lets all the others get their ideas out of their system before he says much about his own view.

When the Others Are Through—A Clear and Tactful Presentation.—When the others are through, however, he should present his own ideas in a statement that is clear, coherent, brief and simple, and positive without being argumentative. It occurs repeatedly that after a long discussion, particularly if the situation is complex and if personalities and digressions have taken much time, a clear, comprehensive recommendation from an unexpected quarter, if presented in definite but considerate terms, will win general assent. The statement should not be argumentative, however; above all it should be in no way triumphant or provocative.

Self-Control Indispensable.—The most important consideration as regards conference communication is rigid suppression of all impulse to display one's individual authority or skill. A con-

ference is the worst occasion in the world for showing off. Jealousy, vanity, suspicion on the part of the other conferees are very easily roused. Particularly if a man is by nature quick, clever, brilliant of speech or dramatic in manner, he may at any moment, quite unconsciously, stir resentment and opposition. The sagacious man is careful not to seek the limelight. He presents plans as coming from others, not from himself, following the practice of the canny Ben Franklin as related in his "Autobiography." He is quick to encourage and develop ideas of other conferees which move in the line of what he wishes. Finally, he remembers always that it is a common understanding and a common action which he is to further, not his own immediate advantage.

The ultimate requirements of conference communication are self-control, alert good-humor, acuteness to see essential meanings behind inadequate statements by other persons, and tact in keeping the discussion to the point and relieving strain.

CHAPTER VIII

SERVICE COMMUNICATION

Outside Contacts: Service Talk and Trading Talk.—What about the business communication with those outside one's own organization or group, the people we have to approach on all sorts of occasions, and those who come to us? It might at first seem that here the complexities baffle analysis. Yet even here it is possible to trace a few main lines of relationship and then to work out some principles that will prove useful.

There are two aspects of communication with outsiders with which everyone is concerned. One form of such communication, which is likely first to come to mind and which in recent years has been widely discussed, is the talk involved in selling or buying—what might be called *trading communication*. Before taking up this special variety, however, let us try to get a picture of the general type, the communication involved in the performance of the work which we do for others or which others do for us. This universal, fundamental form we may call *service communication*. We rarely stop to consider its nature. We take it for granted as we do the air we breathe. To get a comprehensive view of its main requirements and difficulties will smooth our path in the business or professional contacts which come to every one of us.

With both types of outside contacts the governing principles prove to be the same that have been stressed in the three preceding chapters: clear analysis of a situation, tactful and dynamic suggestion, and an attitude of readiness and reasonableness.

"Finding a Common Ground" with Outsiders.—The perspective is different, however. Outsiders are strangers. In dealing with them the adjustment required is greater in degree

and less easily calculated than in dealing with official associates. The problem of finding a common ground is always present. This perfectly obvious fact we are forever prone to forget.

In olden time the stranger, the outsider, was an enemy. Just as it was a duty to trust one's own group and to make full allowance for difficulties and misunderstandings, so it was a duty to distrust strangers, to take every advantage, to have one's weapons always ready. We have largely outgrown that attitude today, of course, but relics of it remain with us, complicating in various ways our outside contacts.

The fact remains that we do not really *know* the outsider as we know our own people. Our associates wear the same uniform as we do, and we feel that they have fundamentally the same objectives, whatever may be the surface friction from personal jealousies. We know how far we can go with them. But with outsiders we cannot be so sure as regards ultimate objectives, however close may be the agreement upon some minor matter. The problem of making a satisfactory impression upon a person whom we know but slightly if at all, is for most of us always a ticklish one. The replies to the investigation of the use of language in daily life are significant here. With respect to "conversation with strangers and casual acquaintances," they all stress the difficulty of "finding a common ground." You and the other man, very often, have a different communication technique, or as the phrase goes, you do not talk the same language. That leads very often to dealing at cross-purposes.

People Differ.—The differences in the communication technique or language habits of different vocations and social groups are far too little considered by most of us. The "good mixers," the men and women who fit in with group or household wherever occasion takes them, succeed largely because they sense differences of this sort and more or less consciously allow for them. A great many more of us, however, could qualify in this way if we put our minds on the matter.

To a degree we all recognize peculiarities of nature and of manner in people from different sections of the country, different social groups, different lines of business. This is the basis of the amusement we derive from the columnist's jokes about Jews, Irishmen, negroes, Swedes, Scotchmen, southerners, westerners, country rubes, city flappers, and so on. We enjoy Milt Gross's "Nize Baby," as the last generation enjoyed Wallace Irwin's "Letters of a Japanese School Boy." Occasionally we get a deeper flash, as in Kipling's "East is East and West is West," or the remark of the colored housemaid who had to go back to her home every night to sleep because "Ef Ah didn't have cullud folks round me once a day A'd die." It is a question, however, how many of us make practical allowance in ordinary business intercourse for these racial and social differences of which we are well aware.

Different Speech of Different Callings.—How fully do we consider the peculiarities of communication technique of different lines of activity? Every calling develops in its followers more or less special mental attitudes, and these in turn result in ways of talking and of listening that are peculiar to that calling. The doctor's "bedside manner" is not taught in the schools but every family doctor has it. The banker, fencing with all sorts of applicants for credit, is trained in caution and repression of emotion until such tales as that about the banker's glass eye, known to be artificial because it showed some signs of sympathy, gain whimsical credence among unlucky would-be borrowers. The unctuous manner of some politicians, some school superintendents, some old-time ministers, the outgrowth of years of posing and wheedling, is another well-recognized instance. Another is the artistic official profanity of the mate of a freight-boat or the boss of a crew of ditch-diggers, driving gangs of slow-witted and lazy men.

A distinguished New England clergyman and an Irish road contractor—neither one aware of the other's identity—were

marooned on a Vermont bus that was caught by the 1927 flood, and were close companions for six days riding and hiking through the flooded region back to their home city. Not the least interesting feature of the unconventional trip, for the clergyman, was its revelation of the contractor's conversational powers, as remarkable for their vividness and essential wholesomeness as for their picturesque profanity.

Such differences of what may be called vocational speech technique have been noted by novelists and playwrights in every age. Chaucer in his "Prologue" to the "Canterbury Tales"—a cross-section of English life 500 years ago—draws his "nine-and-twenty Pilgrims" with such faithfulness to the vocations represented that we can identify their characteristics with those of individuals of the same callings today. So with the people of Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, and other dramatists of Queen Elizabeth's days, with those of Dickens in the London of a century ago, and of the novelists, dramatists, and poets of every age and language. In the nineteenth century Russian stories of Anton Chekov, or the first century Roman plays of the Latin poet Terence, we can recognize features of the speech technique of twentieth century Americans of similar callings.

These differences exist all about us in the people with whom we do our daily business. When a college class returns for its twentieth reunion, the same distinguishing marks of "doctor, lawyer, merchant, chief" among those who as boys were all much alike, are plain to be seen. Yet in our practical contacts most of us forget to allow sufficiently for these differences.

Utilizing the Study of Vocational Differences.—Signs are beginning to appear that our closer and more intricate business and social relationships are developing more practical attention to the communication technique of different kinds of people. University departments of psychology have been recording the topics of random conversations overheard among men and women, or among persons of different vocations. Such magazines as *The*

English Journal,¹ the national organ of the teachers of English, *American Speech*,² and others, have been publishing special vocabularies of particular callings: lawyers, railroad men, vaudeville actors, hospital physicians and nurses, and so on. Some day we shall have a body of such data large enough for serious comparative studies.

Such records should include, of course, something about the methods of thought-grouping followed by different types of people—the length and form of thought-unit—and something about features of delivery. A steel puddler, an Oregon lumberjack, an Indiana farmer, may perhaps arrange his statements according to a different plan or formula from that of the manager of a woman's dress chain, or of an accountant. Just what are these differences of arrangement? For purposes of tactful approach, it is probably more important to put your thoughts into the grouping which is natural to the man you are addressing than to use his special vocabulary. Some records of this sort are to be found in recent books on salesmanship—for instance in "Developing and Managing Salesmen," by Ray Giles,³ and in the studies of department stores developed by Dr. W. W. Charters at the University of Pittsburgh.⁴ If we could have a hundred careful records of the actual speech technique of typical callings, for analysis and comparison, it would help us greatly toward better functioning when we have to deal with people outside our own group.

Service Communication—Manifold Variety.—Think of the occasions for service communication with customers or patrons, and of the wide range of callings in which it plays a highly important part. There are all kinds of professional people—clergymen, lawyers, teachers, physicians and dentists certainly, and engineers and accountants in some degree. There are the governmental employees, federal, state, and local, and the

¹ *The English Journal*, 6705 Yale Ave., Chicago.

² *American Speech*, The Williams and Wilkins Co., Baltimore.

³ See page 71 above.

⁴ W. W. Charters, *How to Sell at Retail*, Houghton Mifflin Co.

employees of public service companies. Add to these a large proportion of the multitudes engaged in distribution activities, particularly in retail stores, where explaining how to use an article, arranging for repairs, adjusting claims and so on, regularly follow along after a sale. Add to these, again, the millions engaged in personal service of some sort or other, not only the few still working within the walls of the modern household but the multitudes in outside organizations who supply the services once performed by male and female domestics: barbers and beauty shop attendants; janitors of apartment houses; elevator boys; milkmen; icemen; laundrymen; carpenters, painters, plumbers, electricians, who come in to make repairs, etc.; women who come in to help with housework; men who take care of your strip of grass; garage men who have replaced the coachmen and liverymen of a generation ago. Higher up in complexity of service are the insurance agents, real estate men, and personal advisers in many lines.

With a large proportion of all these lines of activity, the talk itself is a large part of the service which you obtain—or which you give to your patrons if you are yourself in one of these callings. How you talk to the people you serve or those who serve you, how you listen, how you respond to what they say, has everything to do with how you get along with them and get your business done.

A Developing Technique.—Talk of this sort is so nearly instinctive with each of us that we think hardly at all about its technique. Nevertheless beginnings have been made at formulating and studying it. So far this has been done chiefly in the professions and by large-scale organizations.

In many works dealing with the practice of the older professions—law, medicine, and especially teaching—some phases of service conversation are discussed. Generally the discussion is brief and incidental, but in a few books, some of them very old, the matter is treated with great thoroughness and detail.

Some of the newer groups of professional workers, the industrial engineers, for example, and members of personnel departments, give much attention to it.

The outstanding example is that of the large-size organizations in which are many subordinate employees whose duties involve dealing with the public in a uniform way. More and more are such organizations finding it desirable to work out service manuals to guide their employees in their contacts. Manuals of this sort are found in many branches of the government service: for postal employees; for county agents of the federal and state agricultural departments;⁵ for bank inspectors; for inspectors in many other lines. The public service companies have developed many of them—railroads, traction, bus, and taxi companies, gas and electric companies, telephone companies. Among the great distributing organizations—department stores, laundries, and milk companies—such manuals are often prepared for the men in the delivery service. The service departments of automobile companies have them; so have the companies which distribute gasoline for automobiles, and the specialty houses which deal in adding machines, filing apparatus and typewriters. Little attempt has yet been made toward comparing and scientifically studying these service manuals. It ought to be done.

Another evidence of growing interest in this matter is found in the codes of ethics which have been adopted by large numbers of trade and professional associations. In "Codes of Ethics" by Edgar L. Heermance,⁶ 200 of these codes are printed. Discussions of them are given in several recent books on business ethics.⁷ Communication is touched only incidentally in the codes, but the germ is there.

Study of the technique worked out by these large organiza-

⁵ See particularly the practical suggestions in a monograph by Professor William A. Broyles, of Pennsylvania State College, on "Graduate Work in Agricultural Education," Pennsylvania State College Bulletin, June 1926.

⁶ Edgar L. Heermance, *Codes of Ethics; A Handbook*, Free Press Publishing Co., Burlington, Vermont.

⁷ Edgar L. Heermance, *Ethics of Business*, Harper & Brothers; James Melvin Lee, *Business Ethics*, The Ronald Press Company; Everett D. Lord, *Fundamentals of Business Ethics*, The Ronald Press Company.

tions has much to offer for small concerns, and for individuals in their contacts with people who supply the wants of the household.

Four Types of Service Contacts.—Without undertaking any exhaustive classification, it is possible to see rather clearly four types of service contacts. First, we have to make inquiries, to obtain information from others. Second, we have to give information, perhaps to give more or less extended instructions. The man who comes to fix the gas stove or the radio set when it goes wrong may have to explain in detail to the man of the house—or more likely the housewife—just what must be done to avoid further trouble. Third, we have to make complaints, regrettable as that may be. Fourth, and also to be regretted, we have to make adjustments of complaints which other people bring against us.

What is needed in these manifold contacts is first of all fairness and friendliness of attitude. But hardly less essential is the ability to make that attitude evident. It is here that so many fail. They lack the technique of the relationship, mainly because they have never thought it out. In addition there is needed power of clear explanation, sound argument, and deft and pleasant persuasion.

Making Inquiries.—In making inquiries the first essential is to determine clearly in advance what it is you want to learn, and how to go about getting the information. How many of us apply this principle in our personal searches for information? Too often, when something comes up on which we need information we think of somebody who may possibly be able to “give us a line” on it, and forthwith we “get in touch with him” and launch a few extempore questions over the telephone, perhaps without stopping to think whether he has the time or is in a mood to consider our questions or to talk freely. If we make an appointment for a call, or for lunch, we are only too apt to spend a good

part of our time in preliminary visiting, or else to plunge bluntly into the heart of our matter before making sure that he is ready.

We could very profitably apply to our own affairs some features of the technique developed in the research departments of great industrial organizations. The experts who conduct market analyses, for example, when they undertake an inquiry, begin by defining with utmost care just what they think they want to find. Next they determine who it is that can give the information needed, and where, how, and when these persons can best be reached. Then they work out deliberately a set of questions, taking care not to have too many, for fear of wearying, offending, or confusing the informant. Framing and asking the questions is an art that calls for all the keenness and tact one can muster. Much can be learned by all of us from the technique of the experienced newspaper interviewer, and that of the old lawyer dealing with witnesses.⁸

Simple, Definite Technique.—Some organizations that make constant use of long-distance telephoning have developed a definite technique. In one such organization of moderate size, before a call is put in the inquirer is required to jot down for himself just what questions he will ask, their order and form, and then to keep to that plan when his call comes in. A supervisor—somewhat like a correspondence supervisor—listens in from time to time on conversations and later presents his criticisms of the conduct of the interview. At first, naturally, this plan was unpopular with the members of the organization, but now they like it. It has saved money for the company and time and temper for the individuals concerned.

Few of us, of course, can spend days or weeks in planning inquiries, as the specialists do, but we might all use systematically the time we have, and follow some such definite technique. Particularly we might give more attention beforehand to the

⁸ Books well worth consulting are "Adventures in Interviewing," by Isaac Marcossou, John Lane & Co. and "The Art of Cross Examination," by Francis A. Wellman, Century Co.

personal characteristics and situation of the individual we have to approach. With some people a good deal of preparatory work is required before they will open up. A fishing expedition begun with only a vague notion of what is to be caught and whether you are to use worms or flies, is always expensive in time, temper, and money. Experience in extracting information from temperamental subordinates can be used to good advantage in outside inquiries. Always time can be saved if the investigator plans his procedure beforehand—whether he is investigating some broad question of organization policy or asking the way from a passing motorist.

Giving Information.—In giving information or instruction to those outside the organization one may utilize very definitely the experience gained in handling subordinates. The point to bear in mind is that outsiders are not at all likely to have the sort of background which could be counted on within the group, and accordingly explanations have to be framed with extreme care. In most instances the outsiders have no clear notion of what it is they need to know. You have to find that out before you can help them. When a client comes to a lawyer, for example, or a physician, the first task of the professional man is to conduct an examination and find out what is the real reason for the call.

Outsiders are generally under no compulsion to listen. You have to put your explanation in a form which is easy and attractive, or they will not make the effort to understand. Here is a fault with the ordinary "information clerk." Lacking imagination and tact, he fails to translate his information into terms that the particular inquirer can grasp. With the barrage of "fool questions" inflicted by the thoughtless public, one can hardly blame the clerk for developing an attitude of perfunctoriness in responding to questions, but such an attitude is fatal to satisfactory performance of his duties.

Precepts never to be forgotten in giving explanations are: First, state them from the point of view of the person addressed.

Second, make them simple—it is practically impossible to have them too simple. Third, make them brief, or they will be confusing and soon forgotten. Fourth, do not be in a hurry. Take time to repeat. It has been pointed out that a direction should usually be stated three times, that is :

Stated plainly and simply.

Repeated in other terms and in greater detail.

Repeated briefly in the original terms.

Teachers are trained to observe such principles in giving explanations to a class. With the adult client or inquirer, of course, any suggestion of the teacher attitude would be unfortunate. The problem is how to secure the same explicitness without ruffling the inquirer's dignity.

Presenting Complaints.—In presenting a complaint there is nearly always a double problem, one of clear understanding and statement and one of tact.

The first steps are much the same as in making an inquiry. You need to determine very clearly in your own mind exactly what your grievance is; to disentangle the real grievance from other circumstances which may appear to be connected with it. Nearly all of us are careless here. We hurry into a complaint while excited and without having thought out our case, and as a result, we present it inaccurately. If the other person is averse to making the adjustment, our inaccuracy gives him a chance to stand on the letter of the law and either refuse or dodge the point.

The other requirement in presenting complaints is tact. We need to find an approach which does not provoke the other person, but tends to rouse and retain his personal good-will. Particularly we need to find a way of presenting our point that enables him to save his face—or his company's face—while granting our request.

If we yield to the natural human impulse to bawl out the offender, the result is, usually, to stiffen him into sullen or angry

opposition. Most grievances result from inadvertence rather than from "cussedness." If you take the attitude that it is merely an inadvertence, a quite natural slip on the part of a man or an organization that of course makes a practice of doing the right thing, you give the other party an easy way out. Even if the wrong was intentional or was due to some inequitable policy, such good-humored and somewhat casual approach, combined with evidence that you have a clear understanding of the situation, will often prompt him to take advantage of your attitude and mend his ways. Over and over this method wins the day. And of course you must be determined to win the day. Tact does not involve giving up your rights.

Making Adjustments.—In making adjustments you are on the other side of the table. Your problem is that of defense against unwarranted claims. You have to find the weak spots, logically, in the plea that is put to you. In most instances it is not difficult to find defects of the kind, because most people fail to prepare their cases carefully. Very often a good defense can be founded either on the merits of the case or upon serious errors in the complainant's course.

When the case against you is really sound, you have very often a double task, that of making an adjustment which is fair to both sides and that of sending the complainant away in a good humor. This last is often a difficult undertaking. Very likely the complainant has become so worked up about the matter that he is no longer reasonable. It is his emotion that you must meet, somehow. Even after fair adjustment has been made, he is likely to nurse a grudge. You cannot afford to have him going about saying: "They tried to put something over on me, but I brought 'em to time. They had to give me my rights."

Diverting Attention.—The secret of successful adjustment in such a case is apt to lie in diverting the attention of the angry complainant. A red herring drawn across the trail at the right

moment has saved many contestants from foolish quarrels, and led eventually to reasonable adjustments. While it is true today as always that a soft answer turneth away wrath, the injection of a new idea often brings speedier results.

The effectiveness of this method—even when the new idea is irrelevant—is illustrated by an experience of the adjustment manager of a Chicago department store with a wealthy and very angry customer, who had withdrawn her own account from the store and induced a number of her friends to do the same. He went to call upon the lady, but before going he made some inquiries about her and discovered, for one thing, that she was from Salem, Massachusetts, and proud of it. He was himself from eastern Massachusetts and had spent a few years in Salem. He managed to open the conversation with a reference to an early experience of his own, casually remarking that it was in Salem, and before the lady realized it they were launched on spirited and friendly recollections of Salem. When after awhile he remarked: "About that error of our company's. You've been treated very badly, and I want to make the thing right for you. We Yankees must stand together or these Chicagoans will run over us," the lady was ready to listen, and ended by calling up her friends then and there and asking them to resume their accounts with the store.

The technique of adjustment is of extreme importance in every line of activity, in private affairs as well as in organization business. The railroads and public service companies, the department stores and other large retail distributors, have had to work it out with utmost care. Most of us do it very badly, on such occasions as cross our path. We fail to consider the psychology of the situation. We fail to find ways of retaining the good-will of the complainant while granting an adjustment that is not too great for the actual rights of the case, or while refusing his claim. It can be done, but it takes keen thinking, control of temper, power of catching an advantage, skill in persuasion, and partic-

ularly command of the detail technique of language and manner. It is worth the while of anyone to look into the methods of concerns that have developed a technique, as described in such books as "The Claim Agent and His Work," by Smith R. Brittingham, attorney for the Seaboard Airline Railway;⁹ "Credits and Collections," by Ettinger and Golieb;¹⁰ and "Credit Management," by Olson and Hallman.¹¹

Difficulties of Service Communication—Inconsiderateness.

—The difficulties that most frequently hinder service communication arise chiefly from a wrong mental attitude; either from inconsiderateness, or more often from failure to visualize the situation and state of mind of the other man.

Inconsiderateness may take the comparatively mild form of perfunctoriness. As noted above, persons whose relations with clients are of routine nature—information clerks, ticket sellers, and so on—are under constant temptation to grow callous about their work and to develop a permanently vexed or cynical attitude toward the public. The handling of routine adjustments, whether orally or by mail, tends to become mechanical even though the employees concerned may continue to fulfil the letter of their duty to their clients and to the house. In two of the leading New York department stores, which make especial efforts to satisfy customers, they say that the clerks who write the routine adjustment letters all day long almost invariably lose their spontaneity and become dull and mechanical in about three weeks.

Sometimes the inconsiderateness comes from the desire of someone "dressed in a little brief authority," as Hamlet expressed it, to show off. The outstanding example in current American life is that of the green "traffic cop." Other instances are found at times in the demeanor of military or medical specialists. This unfortunate attitude may appear, however, in any walk of life,

⁹ Smith R. Brittingham, *The Claim Agent and His Work*, The Ronald Press Company.

¹⁰ Richard P. Ettinger and David E. Golieb. *Credits and Collections*, Prentice-Hall Company.

¹¹ Emery E. Olson and J. W. Hallman, *Credit Management*, The Ronald Press Company.

even among officers of a parent-teacher association, a church guild, or the house committee of a club.

The Wrong Way—The Right Way.—A considerable factor in modern life, because of the cost and transitoriness of present-day footwear, is the shoe repair shop. In a small suburb the leading establishment of this kind is kept by an energetic and obliging Italian. All the best people are his patrons. A few summers ago he took his family to Atlantic City for a fortnight and left the shop in the care of his brother-in-law, a young man not regularly connected with the business. In the space of two weeks the unlucky young man nearly ruined the good-will of the shop through officiousness and maladroitness. Since then, when the boss goes off in the summer, he leaves things in the care of his oldest journeyman, a little elderly person who speaks hardly a word of English but who knows how to smile when he receives a pair of shoes, listen respectfully to the customer's instructions, and then do what the shoes obviously require.

In another suburb of New York some years ago, the home of a number of men of large affairs who needed to use the telegraph at all hours, there was a telegraph operator who was a master of service talk in receiving and delivering messages by telephone. He spoke with exceptional clearness, yet with no trace of affectation or effort. He would have made an excellent radio announcer. He seemed never in a hurry, never wasted words, was always affable, yet never let a customer go without obtaining all the information necessary for handling the message properly, and by his quietly respectful questions as to the identity of a word here or there he saved many a man from a hasty wording that might have meant a costly blunder. He was not a man of exceptional ability, in general, but he had concentrated upon the particular job to which he was assigned. The record of this man, and many another steadily carrying important work, suggests the improvement that might result if we all gave similar attention to service conversation.

Preoccupation.—Our worst hindrance in such communication is our own lack of attention to the situation. This leads to consideration of the other main source of difficulty, failure to visualize the situation, lack of insight and tact.

The most common phase of this difficulty is preoccupation. We are engrossed with what we are to do for our "clients," and fail to explain to them what this is, why it has to be done, and what they in turn need to know about the operation. We and our clients talk at cross-purposes, because we fail to put ourselves in their place and realize what it is that puzzles them. Over and over this occurs in the explanations of experts who are more interested in their work than in the persons for whom they are doing it.

Technical Terms—Necessary but Troublesome.—Finally, and the most troublesome aspect of service talk, there is the matter of technical language. In explanations to outsiders we all tend to employ too exclusively the special terms of our own trade. A publisher's editor talks about *folios* to a fledgling author who has no idea that this is the trade name for *pages*. Lawyers and doctors, from time out of mind, have been notorious for such use of technical terms. In a sense, this fault is a form of preoccupation.

Sometimes, it is believed by the outsider, professional men follow the practice deliberately, to impress client or patient with their learning. This notion, of course, is unjust. There are substantial reasons why the professional man, who is generally little expert in the art of communication, takes refuge in the use of technical terms. The professional man feels keenly the responsibility of the duty for which he has been called in. He knows how little his clients or patients comprehend of the matter, technically. In his desire to get the work done, he is apt to disregard his client's ideas and to make little effort to explain what the situation is and why certain things must be done. He says, in effect, "Leave it to me."

Now the confidence of the client might be won more fully if the professional man—the physician, for example—could manage to look through his client's eyes, and particularly if he could explain the situation in non-technical language. But this last is not at all easy. In the case of a physician, particularly, it is highly difficult to convey accurate shades of meaning in non-technical terms to a person lacking a physician's knowledge of medicine and in a more or less nervous condition. The physician knows that the patient—or the patient's relative with whom he is dealing—is often afraid to face the facts of illness. If asked in plain terms to look squarely at them, as the doctor must, these people are likely to suffer panic. Further, the doctor knows also the ambiguity of non-technical terms, the varying implications they have for the layman. Patient and physician may interpret quite differently the familiar terms they exchange, and neither be aware of the fact. So the physician—and similarly most other professional workers—takes refuge either in giving no explanation at all or in giving one in scientific terms that mean nothing to his listener.

How Study of Language Helps.—In such a case to know when to talk freely, and what words to employ, is one of the most baffling problems of communication. It calls for a deftness in command of communication resources almost equal to the skill of the surgeon's hand. But the surgeon—and here also the situation with other professional workers is parallel—receives little training in the complexities of communication. His general training, indeed, leads him normally to think of his work objectively, with slight attention to personalities. To guard against an excess of this objective attitude, to develop and maintain a sensitiveness to the shadings of personality in his clients, is perhaps the most difficult of his responsibilities. Among attorneys, physicians, and engineers and accountants as well, not a few have reached eminence less because of exceptional technical skill than because of their special command of the resources of communication.

Incidentally, the client or patient—and the patient's relatives—can do a good deal to simplify the problem, through suppression of foolish questions and honest effort to adopt the cool, objective attitude which to the professional man is evidence of sane self-control.

How One Doctor Talked.—In an article in the *American Federationist* by Dr. William H. Park, director of the New York Public Health Laboratory, is an account of an effective bit of service talk. A physician practicing in a city suburb chances to ride to town with an acquaintance whose family he has attended:

"Doctor," said my train companion, a successful young business man and father of a family, "there is diphtheria in the house next door to us and my wife was all stirred up this morning about our youngsters. Says she didn't sleep all night, worrying about them."

"I don't wonder," I told him. "How old are the children?"

"Ellen's four and Alice two."

"As soon as you get into the city," I spoke in no mild tones, "call up your wife. Tell her to take those children to the doctor at once and have them treated with a good squirt of toxin-antitoxin. Unless by any chance they show the slightest sign of beginning diphtheria, when he will give them a dose of antitoxin."

My friend turned a half-belligerent eye on me, but he betrayed a weakness in his efficient armour of self-confidence. He was an authority in his own office; he sized up a situation and he acted. Here he was a trifle out of his element, but he'd heard some bad things of virus. His children weren't sick yet and he didn't see the sense of doing things to them that might be harmful. I could read all these ideas in the set of his jaw even before he answered me.

"I've heard something of that," he said. "It's all right, I suppose, if you get good virus. I'll see how they are tonight."

I might have been a missionary, judged by the zeal and determination that seized me. A blue-devil battalion of facts flashed through my mind. I hurled them at him. It's true I talked quietly, but I gave him something of what a lifetime of work with infectious diseases and serums had taught me. I poured figures out before him. He'd understand figures.

"Do you know," I asked him, "that in 1924 right here in New York State, outside of New York City, there were 5,885 cases of diphtheria? Do you know that 368 of the victims died? And let me tell you this,

more than half of them were under five years of age. You have two little girls. Do those facts mean anything to you?"

He wasn't very comfortable. In fact, he wasn't even trying to hide his fright.

"You're telling me that young children get it and die more often than any other people?"

Emphatically I was. I jabbed another fact home: "Until recently one out of every ten cases of diphtheria has ended fatally."

He flinched.

I was beginning to be sorry for him, but I still had a story to tell. I would gladly have stood up on a seat and soap-boxed the whole car for there were a lot of men in it, conscientious good fathers, who needed to know the truth and the whole truth. "Recently," I said, "since Behring in Germany and Roux over in France discovered antitoxin, we've learned how to protect your children, every child from diphtheria. We have such things as Schick tests which tell us whether a child is immune or isn't. We have toxin anti-toxin to immunize him if he isn't. And if he should contract diphtheria through the ignorance or carelessness of those responsible for him, we have antitoxin to check the disease and save his life. Don't fool yourself about good and bad virus. There's only good; every bit of it has to pass federal inspection. If a child gets diphtheria nowadays, it's his parents' fault."

"Hold up, Doctor, I'm not trying to murder my own children. They'll get their squirt of virus all right." The train was nearing the station and my companion was already out of his seat. He was heading for a telephone booth as fast as his two feet could carry him.

"Thanks," he called back to me, "thanks."

I hurled a last shot at him. "Pass the word along to your neighbors. They have children too." He waved me a hand of assent and I caught the words: "I sure will."

Essentials of Service Communication.—Service Communication should be full enough for ready understanding but not verbose. While high-priced service men—lawyers, physicians, auditors, and so on—sometimes tend to give too little time to such communication and to dismiss their clients too cursorily, many persons who render minor services are garrulous. Women who come in to do housework are notable offenders. Often a tired housewife has to dismiss a sorely needed helper because the woman talks so much that she wastes the employer's time.

Barbers, it is whispered, have been accused of the same fault. A department store which made a specialty of fountain pens had an elderly man whose business was the repair of pens. He was extraordinarily deft and expert, and attracted much trade. But he cost the firm almost as much as he earned for them, because of his garrulousness. He could not merely do his work and let it go; he had to accompany each job with a long lecture to the customer upon the care of pens.

Particularly with respect to service talk it is important to bear in mind always the need of steady cooperation between "pitcher" and "catcher," between the speaker and the listener. What is needed in service talk, on the part of the speaker, may be summarized as follows: (1) attention to the client and his thoughts; (2) accurate analysis of the case, and of the client's remarks; (3) orderly formulation in simple words of needed directions and advice; (4) tact in presentation, to catch and hold the client's interest.

What is needed on the part of the listener may be summarized thus: (1) civility, that is to say willingness to listen even to a matter that appears puzzling or strange; (2) serious effort to understand the necessary technical complexities of the case; (3) recognition of the difficulties the expert experiences in getting his meaning across to an untechnical mind, and honest effort to cooperate by means of suitable questions and other indications of understanding of what is said.

CHAPTER IX

TRADING COMMUNICATION

Of Universal Concern.—Trading communication, the talk that relates to buying and selling, comes into the life of everyone because practically everyone gains his livelihood directly or indirectly by the sale of commodities or service, and everyone must purchase supplies with which to live. Skilful conduct of such communication affects not only the individual desiring to sell or to buy, but the other party to the negotiation also. Moreover, it affects the community at large. The more rapidly and smoothly the process is conducted on each occasion, the better society's work is done.

The Trading Responsibilities of Those Not Specialists.—Trading communication has been more extensively discussed than any other form of business communication. The discussion, however, has been confined almost wholly to a single point, the technique of selling employed by regular salesmen. Little consideration has been given to selling as related to other people, and hardly more to the subject of buying, in which every one of us is constantly engaged.

The neglect of these broad phases of the subject is unfortunate. While the technique of the regular salesman is sometimes portentously skilful, most persons, regarding selling communication as something entirely aloof from themselves, have little comprehension of its principles or methods. When they have occasion to undertake it, as nearly everyone has, now and then, they acquit themselves very poorly. Buying, moreover, although practiced constantly by all persons, is by most of us handled very badly. Otherwise there would be fewer sucker lists, fewer

bargain sales, fewer houses stuffed with unnecessary articles bought on instalment, or bought to be thrown away.

Difficulties, Old and New.—Now in handling these activities there are difficulties, some of them hang-overs from unfortunate old-time conditions, some resulting from the special features of our present social organization, some perhaps inherent in the trading relationship itself. They can all be lessened, however, if not entirely eliminated, through study of the implications of the trading relationship.

In former days, for instance, when life was slower and contacts fewer, trading was a more leisurely affair than today, a process of lengthy bargaining which stimulated debate, with ingenious declamation and appeal. Such bargaining persists to-day in the Orient. It persisted until recently in horse-trading, as shown in "David Harum," a novel published a generation ago by Edward N. Westcott and still worth reading. To a considerable extent it persists today with the women for whom "shopping" is a regular sport. The difficulty with the method is that it wastes time and leads to mere contests of wits.

The special trouble of our own time is rather the haste and carelessness with which much of our trading is done. Our purchases even of things of importance and large cost are too often made hastily, on impulse, or when we are preoccupied with other matters. In the selling which we have to do, similarly, we are prone to act hurriedly, to rely upon personality and cleverness rather than upon adequate study of the situation.

Selling.—There is no need here of adding another to the many treatises on the work of the selling specialist. Rather, let us consider the selling communication which devolves occasionally upon other people—the members of a non-selling department in a big organization, the man running his own little business, the farmer, the professional man or woman, the housewife—and the buying communication in which every one engages in connection with his business, personal and social affairs.

Two Widespread Misconceptions.—About selling there are two widespread misconceptions. It is a necessary activity, yet most persons do not recognize its necessity in relation to themselves. A large proportion, moreover, regard it as an unworthy activity and seek to avoid it.

Obviously, in modern industry a great proportion of the workers are largely relieved from concern for selling in connection with their business by the nature of their duties. There are millions engaged in production work who have no direct connection with the sale of the product which they make and by means of the exchange of which they must live. The same is true of the transportation workers who carry the goods, and of the army of office workers who record transactions.

As for the smaller army of those engaged in professional service—physicians, teachers, engineers and technicians of all sorts, clergymen, officials of charitable institutions, and the like—the nature of their work tends to prevent them from thinking about selling. The success of a professional practitioner depends at bottom upon the quality of the service he renders. If he is fitted for his calling, he becomes engrossed deeply in the service itself, and is apt to forget the selling which must somehow be done if he is to make a living. Every now and then we read of the death of a prominent physician who “never sent a bill.” There are cases beyond number of scientists who are “too busy to make money”—another way of saying that they pay little attention to selling their services.

Selling the Organization.—There is one sort of selling, however, required of all members of an organization, whether salesmen or those working in other lines. They have to “sell the organization,” that is to say, create and maintain good-will for it by means of their contacts with its patrons and with the community at large. Their service communication is in one sense selling communication. In this sense the delivery boy of a department store has a selling function; the conductor of a street-car;

the man who reads meters for the gas company. Those working in what are regarded as non-selling departments would probably find, if they could analyze their situation fully, that their advancement is affected much more than they might suppose by their skill in such good-will selling. If these people understood better the nature and importance of the sales function and its relation to themselves, they could better fulfil their responsibilities to their organization.

Now and then, besides, persons in non-selling positions, particularly in a small organization, have to pinch-hit for salesmen and engage in actual distribution of the company's wares.

Selling Your Own Services.—And one thing at least everyone must sell—his own services. However the fact may be hidden, this compulsion holds for the day-laborer and the general manager; for teacher, physician, clergyman, engineer, artist, bookkeeper, and public servant. And this primary form of selling most of us do very poorly. Nearly everyone shrinks from it, in some cases because of timidity, in others because of a false modesty, in many others from lack of understanding of the nature of the selling relation.

The Problem of the Professional Man.—With the professional practitioner, in especial, this aspect of the matter is serious. He, more than other persons, shrinks from this duty. He is apt to believe that he ought not to try to sell his services, that he should wait and let others come and buy. Yet it is the man engaged in private professional practice who is most under economic pressure to be continually selling his own services. The employee of an organization, whether low or high in rank, may settle his problem of employment once a year, or at even longer intervals. After that, for the term of employment, he can forget this necessary problem of selling and concentrate upon service. But the physician, the public accountant, the consulting engineer, whose interest actually is focused upon service, has

to think about arranging for compensation in connection with every bit of service which he furnishes his clients.

And professional people, generally, are far from successful in their handling of this necessary form of selling. The doctor who failed to send out his bills is an instance. He may have avoided some temporary unpleasantness thereby, but his family had to pay for it. Nor were his patients in reality benefited by getting something for nothing.

The neglect of professional people to face squarely the problem of selling naturally results in unfairness and misunderstanding. Sometimes they resort to charging "what the traffic will bear" in a way that brings discredit upon their professions. As the relations of professional persons to clients are nearly always intimate and personal, it is most important for all concerned that their selling be handled sensibly and economically.

The Professional Man's Duty.—An eminent Chicago physician, Dr. Burton Haseltine, says this of the need of better economic practice in his own profession: ¹

No other occupation is more completely modernized in every detail of technic; and no other is in economic matters so sadly antiquated. Surely one of the functions of the technical school is to prepare its students for the conduct of what is to be their life business. Surely the medical student is entitled to some authoritative instruction in the economic problems of medical practice. He needs instruction in the legitimate ways of seeking to use the skill he has acquired and in obtaining an honest return for it. Along with a high standard of technical skill he should be taught a high standard of economic responsibility. No one would discourage high ideals of service nor deny our peculiar pride that our calling is one demanding such ideals. But service, like charity, begins at home and the physician's first duty to humanity and to the state is to provide properly for those personally dependent upon him. There is nothing in the code of ethics requiring a doctor to leave his children penniless.

This situation holds of other professions as well. It is related that an architect in a western city who had taken his

¹ Burton Haseltine, M. D., *Progress in Medical Economics, Chemical Medicine*, January 1926.

A.B. at Yale and his technical degree later at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, went back one June to the reunion of his Yale class and then to a gathering of his Tech class at Cambridge. When he got home someone asked him how his friends were getting on. His reply was that most of his Tech classmates seemed to be in the employ of his Yale classmates.

While it is not fair to draw too wide an inference from this story, it is a generally recognized fact that the technical men, as a group, are distinctly underpaid, as compared with those whose work is of a general character. If more technical men had a clear grasp of what selling means and of its technique, perhaps they would be able to dispose of their services on a sounder economic basis.

Causes of Ineffectiveness—Attention Elsewhere.—There are two principal causes for the poor command of selling on the part of most people.

First, concentration on production or professional work almost inevitably leads one to disregard selling, and often unfits one for it. The producer or professional man is directing his attention continually to the quality of the product, with respect to an absolute standard. He is led continually to think of its defects. When he has to sell it, he has a near-sighted view of its value. He fails to realize how it appears to the outsider, the consumer for whom it is designed. In his sales talk he is likely to stress points which mean little to the inquirer, to apologize for trivial defects instead of presenting fundamental merits. On the other hand, paradoxical as it may appear, he sometimes goes too far in the other direction. He may be so engrossed in the product which he is making as to overestimate its importance to the world and present it in terms that the customer feels to be unwarranted. The regular salesman, accustomed to view his own product in relation to competing products and to the customer's actual needs, is likely to see with truer perspective.

Traditional Distrust of Selling.—Second, and a fact of great significance, the man engaged in production or professional work is not unlikely to have an inherited distrust of all selling communication as essentially dishonest, or at least as somehow unworthy, and to pride himself upon freedom from it. There is a widespread feeling that selling involves misrepresentation, getting people to take what they do not really want. This view is erroneous and regrettable but it exists in the minds of many persons who should know better.

In medieval days and earlier, this attitude was very marked and the standing of "merchants," those recognized as specifically concerned with trading, was decidedly low. The leading classes in the old society, land-owner, soldier, and cleric, looked down on the merchant. Those who lived on the products of cultivation of the soil thought that any concern for selling was unworthy of the attention of an honorable and independent producer. The artisan distrusted and feared the merchant. The notion that all "middlemen" are parasites on society, whose profits are gained at the expense of producer and consumer, is perhaps a modern relic of this old view.

Selling Not a Matter of "Putting It Over."—It must be admitted that the frequent chicanery and deceit on the part of the old-time merchants went far toward explaining this attitude on the part of other persons. It is likely, also, that some of the current talk about salesmanship which centers attention upon the salesman's personal cleverness tends to keep alive the unfortunate misunderstanding. Phrases like "the selling game," "putting it over," "high-pressure salesmanship," or the recital of the exploits of "star salesmen" who "can sell anything," are hindrances to clear understanding of the functions of a necessary factor in exchange. Again, too great concentration upon "selling" may have an unfortunate effect on the habitual attitude of the regular salesman. It may breed exaggeration and loose talk, along with weakness of judgment and of critical power. Sometimes it

breeds plain cynicism. The salesman may sometimes come to think that negotiations are wholly a matter of "putting over" by means of clever sophistry.

Observe, there is a dead-line in the matter of recommending or persuasion, as in all other communication. When the retail clerk says, "I wear them myself," the customer is likely to be repelled. Not necessarily because he—or she—regards the clerk as a person of lower social order, but rather because of the feeling that the trading transaction does not warrant bringing in personal relationships. Some years ago a prominent advertising man wrote a series of signed advertisements about a certain large organization, describing in detail its organization, personnel, and methods. The stories drew close attention because of the apparent ring of personal feeling. Next year, however, he wrote a similar series about another company in an entirely different field, and the effect was unfavorable. People had lost confidence in his sincerity.

Selling Indispensable—A Social Need.—A clearer conception is gained if we look at selling not as a splendid adventure for the individual salesman, but as a service to the consumer, the buyer, and to the public. The importance of selling is properly to be measured, first, with reference to the needs of the purchaser; second, with reference to the economic value to society of what is sold. Fundamentally, the justification of selling is the fact that the article, commodity, service, requires to be presented and explained to the purchaser. It is entitled to its day in court. Today, as never before, industry is vast and highly specialized. In most trading transactions it is not possible for the customer, unaided, to appraise clearly the value of the article he thinks of buying, either intrinsically or in comparison with other articles. He needs advice and guidance from someone who knows all this, and who is qualified to put the facts before him.

The Salesman the Agent of Both Producer and Purchaser.
—In truth, the salesman is the agent of the purchaser as well as

of the house that pays his salary. The purchaser needs a counsellor; the article—and the house that has the responsibility for distributing it—needs a demonstrator. The salesman has the duty of filling both functions. When this conception is attained, selling is put upon a self-respecting basis. It takes its rightful place as a special type of service communication.

Today, happily, the old-time insurance agent, with his motto of "Let me get him once," is very nearly extinct. The old-time stock-salesman is giving place to the responsible representative of a reliable house, who knows the situation of his customers and whose function is to guide them among the complexities of the countless securities on the market. Many wholesale salesmen are virtually advisers of the retail firms whom they supply. There are many salesmen and saleswomen in retail stores who have a large clientele depending upon them habitually for advice in the purchase of personal articles. The existence of this relation is shown even by the methods of fakirs and crooks, whose regular procedure is to induce the prospect to look upon them as advisers and then deceive him.

Salesmanship—The Four Points—Communication.—This conception, that the salesman is and should be the responsible agent of his customer, is the attitude taken in the standard books on salesmanship that have appeared in recent years. In the technique of the regular salesman, as described in "Salesmanship," by Ferris and Collins,² or "Constructive Salesmanship," by John A. Stevenson,³ there are certain points that can be applied with advantage by those who are not regularly salesmen. The main features of this technique are:

1. Knowledge of the article and its uses, both in itself and with reference to competing articles.
2. Knowledge of the prospect's needs, his personality as well as his situation.

² E. E. Ferris and George R. Collins, *Salesmanship*, The Ronald Press Company.

³ John A. Stevenson, *Constructive Salesmanship*, Harper & Bros.

3. Power of describing the article in the proper colors, showing its suitability for the customer's needs.
4. Power of protecting the customer against his own lack of knowledge, against misleading circumstances, and against his own whims.

As regards all but the first of these points, what is especially necessary is command of the technique of communication. The work of the salesman involves first of all understanding his customer, and then rousing his attention, holding his interest, stimulating his legitimate desires, and helping him—not forcing him—to decide, that is to say, helping him against his own irresolution.

How do the non-selling members of an organization and how does the professional practitioner measure up as regards the four essential points laid down by the salesmanship books?

Knowledge of the Goods.—As to knowledge of the article or service which they have to dispense they show up well. It is this, chiefly, with which they have been concerned. Further, as they are not labelled “salesmen,” their statements are not met with continuously active challenge from their prospects. In a certain large bond house the expert who heads the statistical department, though not regularly engaged in selling and little interested in it, has a number of customers who insist upon coming to him for their purchases. They respect his special knowledge and his objective attitude toward the securities whose course he studies.

Knowledge of Other People.—On the other hand, as to knowledge of other people, of “customers,” the showing of these non-selling classes is not so good. The production man in an organization is very likely to be absorbed in mechanical processes. He gets little practice in considering the special situation and needs of the individual customer. The professional man, though he is in a position to know the needs of his clients, often takes little interest in them as individuals. Now it is not without sig-

nificance that the typical salesman is represented as a "good fellow." He is nearly always a man who is interested in people rather than in things or ideas. Because thus interested, he visualizes readily how the individuals he meets are thinking or feeling; what are their wants, their tastes, their actual conditions. He does not think of his customers as abstract "cases," but as Bill Brown who has a general store in a town of 5,000 people and who needs a certain delivery truck because it will help him hold his advantage over the chain across the street; or as Dr. Harvey Rogers, an eye and ear man, forty years old, who is now earning \$25,000 a year in a growing suburb, but who has a wife and three boys and very little money laid aside, and who ought therefore to have health insurance sufficient to carry his family and office expenses if he should fall ill and his income should stop. Men and women in other lines of endeavor might well pattern after the salesman in this closeness of interest in his customers as individuals.

Power of Description.—It is in respect to power of presentation, in energy and resourcefulness in explaining to others the claims of the article or service for which we are responsible, that most of us who are not regular salesmen especially fall short. The salesman must be able to present the article in true but favorable colors. As in a lawyer's plea for his client, the chief essentials are: sound analysis of the situation; skill in organizing the structure of his statement; skill in enforcing significant points with appropriate and pleasing phrasing and manner. The article or service needs to be shown in its best light, for it has to stand the opposition and criticism of rivals and the apathy of the customer who lacks the background to realize its value fairly.

But sales talk by persons not regularly salesmen is apt to show lack of consideration of what the prospect needs to be told. Men trained to a cool, factual view of matters with which they must deal often seem to other persons, when they undertake persuasion, to express only a bald, "take it or leave it" attitude.

When this failure to make allowances for the mental condition of the customer is complicated, as often it is in the case of the professional man, by a disposition to regard selling as an unnecessary and really improper activity in connection with his own service—to think that the customer ought to come to *him*—it may spell disaster for his work. And if his service is really worthy, that is not fair to the public.

Power of Counsel.—Finally, the salesman has the duty of protecting his customers against their own weaknesses, irresolution, and whims. He has to allow for and overcome their preoccupation, ignorance, prejudice, and tendency to shirk responsibility. In addition to accuracy of knowledge and clearness of thought, sales talk requires warmth, zeal, energy. To persuade hesitating customers to follow their best judgment and satisfy their legitimate desires, a man needs the power of sympathy and the power of expressing his own attitude and his own belief in what he recommends. He should be able to make his feeling evident as well as to keep it within reasonable bounds. To rouse the feelings of other persons who are relatively cold, and aid them to realize their underlying impulses, he has to utilize his own emotions and imagination. He has to know how to explode the blasting powder in the right way, so as to do good, not harm, to all parties concerned.

The "Will-to-Sell."—Most important of all, selling involves effort of will. If the "prospect" is unwilling, hostile, apathetic, the seller has to rouse interest and overcome hostility, and to do this requires effort. There must be determination not to be discouraged at refusals or indications of coldness but to persist until an approach is found that wins attention and interest. In this point those unaccustomed to selling are apt to be weak. They are hindered by lack of what the books call the "will-to-sell." They dislike being rebuffed, they cannot come back after a refusal. They have, also, a perfectly natural dislike of intruding

into the affairs of other people. But when one has the responsibility of advocating a cause or pushing the distribution of a commodity or service, these personal feelings have to be put aside. To hold back because of your personal daintiness is only to put a heavier load upon your associates—who also, very likely, have their “feelings”—or else to bring failure upon the enterprise, whether running a store, growing fruit, building bridges, teaching school, or doctoring sick people. The plain duty rests upon everyone in active life to find a way to support adequately the enterprise with which he is connected without recourse to unethical methods. That calls for clear thinking and for vigorous effort to “find the door” in approaching other people. The suggestions in books on salesmanship regarding ways of developing and utilizing the will-to-sell are highly valuable to men and women whose duties make selling only an occasional activity. A little book by President Scott, of Northwestern University, “Influencing Men In Business,” is a remarkably clear and vigorous statement of principles.⁴

Occasional practice of selling is an excellent discipline for anyone. It gives him a better realization of what his profession or calling means to society, a better comprehension of the significance and relative importance of organization policies and methods. It keeps him aware of the standards and point of view of the outside public. It clears his mind, as a dash of cold water clears coffee.

Buying.—Buying has received much less discussion in print than has selling. There are a few books on the work of the purchasing agent of a big company; a few on the work of the retail store “buyer,” who is really both buyer and seller; and some discussion, chiefly in scattered items, on the buying that a woman has to do in obtaining supplies for the household. But we have had no analysis of the principles of buying that is to

⁴Walter Dill Scott, *Influencing Men in Business*, The Ronald Press Company.

be compared with the study of the principles and procedures of selling.

The fact seems odd, at first thought, for buying touches every one of us. We are all buying land and houses, furniture, clothes, food, services—necessaries and pleasures in innumerable variety. What explanation can there be? The chief reason, perhaps, is the familiar one, that for most of us buying is an activity so constant and yet so incidental that we take it for granted. Each of us thinks that he “gets by” satisfactorily, and it is human nature to take no more trouble about studying a matter than is necessary. In addition, the buying specialists, the purchasing agents, are nowhere near so numerous as the selling specialists, and their work receives much less attention.

Skill Needed in Buying—Often Lacking.—Yet we are all engaged continually in buying, and while many of our purchasing transactions are trivial—a paper, a cigar, a necktie—some of them are highly important for ourselves and for our families or for the organization to which we belong. And upon reflection it will be agreed that fully as much skill is required in buying as in selling, if results are to be satisfactory. In buying you are either defending yourself from the persuasion of a professional assailant, the salesman, or you are trying to obtain something when no seller is ready at hand to serve you.

The chances are, probably, that most of us do our buying even less efficiently than our selling. Perhaps because the impulse to defend ourselves, to be cautious and prudent, is less constant and vigorous than is the impulse to aggression. The odds are strongly against the buyer when he meets with a salesman who is determined, skilful, and not mindful of the ethics of his calling. The purchaser, very often, is not on guard. The salesman chooses carefully the time and the circumstances of his approach. Further, if the salesman suggests a line of thought which is plausible but unsound, the buyer is often unable at the moment to see its weak points, or to think of countervailing considerations.

Purchasing an Intellectual Activity.—Now, whereas selling is to a very considerable extent a matter of the emotions, buying is an intellectual activity primarily. It calls for power of clear and quick thinking, accurate analysis, ready and searching questioning. The buyer must keep his eyes open. The old phrase, "Caveat emptor"—"Let the buyer beware"—still applies, even though today the salesman for a responsible concern does not deliberately seek to deceive. Always there is need of caution, regard for objections and alternatives, watchfulness for flaws in the article and for imperfect knowledge, inconsistency, exaggeration on the part of the salesman. Always, at least, the buyer must be on his guard against his own hasty impulses.

Treatises on marketing assemble the various motives which lead one to buy in two groups: Reason motives and Emotional motives. With most of us, they point out, the second type has ordinarily the greater weight. Nearly everyone has some pet economy, some article or service to which we carefully apply Reason motives. Having done this, however, the same person will turn round and "let go," impulsively, on something else. For most of us, to be consistently prudent and careful seems an unnatural effort. We see something that we want, and as we are pressed for time, or preoccupied, we take it without stopping to compare or to look on all sides of the transaction. Very often the article thus hastily obtained does not meet expectations, and then the buyer jumps to the conclusion that the seller has tricked him, that he has been "stung," when in reality the fault is with himself. Who of us has not many a time bought thus in haste to repent at leisure?

This weakness of hasty buying is of course played upon by dishonest sellers, who flatter and misrepresent, knowing that the hasty buyer will not look into the facts. The result of such careless purchasing is a heightening of the unjust prejudice against all selling and all salesmen. Impulsive purchasers assume that all salesmen are tricksters; they fail to differentiate; and thus

fail to look for and to meet with reliable sellers. The result is an added handicap to all dealers who are honest.

The Arts of Questioning and Listening.—The individual can learn much that is useful to him in his own buying from the technique of the regular purchasing agent. The man who has the responsibility of buying for a large establishment thinks first of all about price, but not merely the apparent price. He considers also quality, service, durability, convenience, quickness of delivery, ease of reordering if required, reliability of the selling house. He allows himself time for careful analysis and reflection. Systematic observance of these points in our personal buying transactions would probably save money for ninety-nine out of a hundred of us, and greatly increase the service obtained from our purchases.

While selling calls peculiarly for command of the arts of presentation, buying calls equally for the arts of listening. In buying you have to employ the technique of inquiry discussed in the preceding chapter. There is this difference, however. In ordinary inquiries the problem is chiefly that of opening the mouth of someone who is not skilled in talk, and of keeping him to the point when at last he opens up. In purchasing you are dealing with someone who may have an active interest in concealment of the facts, even in misrepresentation. Manifestly, in this situation command of the art of asking questions is of the highest importance, and this in turn depends very largely upon command of the art of listening. The advice of Judge Gary to the students of commerce has valuable suggestions in connection with our personal buying: Always to remember that few of us are fortunate enough in any instance to "know it all"; and always to allow for the things that are not said.

Carefulness Without Meanness.—On the other hand, it is to be borne in mind that our questioning cannot cross the dead-line of reasonableness, fairness, civility, or we shall not obtain the

service we desire. If the purchaser appears unduly suspicious, he stirs the seller's dislike and provokes him to unfair dealing, or at least keeps him from giving his best terms. This is something which the regular purchasing agent has learned to allow for. Even though he has all the aids of systematic files, comparative prices, special data, and the trump card of possible future orders, he is careful not to provoke the seller to suspicion and hostility. For the ordinary man in connection with his personal buying, such self-control in his inquiries is indispensable.

Caution and fastidiousness in buying, if carried too far, may react upon the character of the buyer and make him fussy and annoying in other relationships. A buyer for a leading mail-order house, by nature hearty and jovial, became so much the victim of misplaced caution that he could not tell a story in company for fear of being caught in an inexact statement. The head of a leading firm of accountants, a man of unusual ability, permitted himself to grow so fussy about trifles that he became a laughing-stock among his acquaintances. He spent so much time and energy looking for petty defects in the transactions in which he was engaged that he often lost the advantages to which his house was entitled.

As the temptation of the seller is misrepresentation, the temptation of the buyer is fussiness and greediness. The phrases, "a hard bargainer," "beating him down," "skinflint," "get it for a little less," and so on, illustrate the feeling. Complaint about unethical buyers is much less common than that about unethical sellers perhaps because most of us think of ourselves as buyers—consumers—rather than as sellers. But it exists, and should be allowed for.

"What's your bottom price?"

"So much by the thousand, and 5 per cent off for five thousand."

"I'll take a thousand if you'll give me the five thousand rate."

Among self-respecting men there is a natural disgust for the meanness of this attitude and for the sort of talk it entails. How to obtain information without giving offense; how to dissect

the statements made by a seller without implying suspicion of his honesty of intention or his good sense—that is the communication problem of purchasing.

The problems of buying are specially difficult for those who have a small organization to buy for, or small resources to buy with. Consider, for example, the problem of the president of a “poor but honest” college who has to engage a competent instructor in a field where the college is weak, with but little money for salaries.

Women Are Skilful Buyers.—Buying is particularly, in the modern community, the woman’s function. Years ago a little boy had to accompany his mother in her shopping expeditions to the old-time department stores of the city. Her skilful handling of the task of buying for a big family, with only a modest purse, is still vivid in his mind. She was good humored and friendly with the salespeople yet did not go too far. She never offended their self-respect, yet she was always watchful. She was not carried away by first enthusiasms. She was a skilful questioner, who pushed inquiries only far enough to learn what was needed, never stopping to argue trivialities or to win a battle. Most men could learn a good deal from their wives about the communication technique of buying.

At bottom are not both selling and buying essentially service contacts? Trading is never merely an irresponsible game. In selling you are the agent both of the organization from which you receive your salary and of the customers or clients with whom you deal. In purchasing you are a trustee, with the duty of obtaining equitable value in return for the money you pay out.

PART III

SOCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL RELATIONS

Man must . . . direct his life and actions with reference to those among whom, and for whom, among other purposes, he lives. A man must not retire into solitude and cut himself off from his fellow men. He must be ever active to do his part in the great whole.—MARCUS AURELIUS ANTONINUS: Meditations.

CHAPTER X

THE CLUB RELATIONSHIP

The Impulse to "Get Together."—While home and one's calling are the chief concerns of life, each of us feels the need, in addition, of regular association with his peers, outside of home and business. The circle of worn chairs round the pot-bellied stove in the crossroads store may have disappeared with the stove—and the store itself—in the face of steam heat and improved transportation, but the impulse which created that circle has not disappeared. It is a necessity of life to get together for the enjoyment of common pleasures or the accomplishment of common ends.

We disapprove of "the joiner," who dissipates time and energy in too many associations. We disapprove more strongly of the "climber," who pretends interest in such relationship merely to exploit them for personal profit or ambition. But we approve the "good mixer," who is ready to do his part in the activities of his associates and community.

Importance in Modern Life.—The old-time village was rarely the scene of a club; none was needed there. The complex demands of modern life, however, especially of city life have made organization necessary even for fellowship. The tastes, the duties, the sports which brought men together informally and at odd times and places now summon them to specified places at fixed times. Organization runs through every phase of human interest. The variety of voluntary associations in a modern community is hardly less bewildering than the variety of the activities by which people make a living. In New York City various lists of clubs and associations of different types are issued annually,

giving the titles and addresses of such organizations as care to register. If you should put together these lists—social clubs of various kinds, fraternal bodies, labor unions, professional and trade associations—you would have a volume of hundreds of pages, and a total of entries running far up into the thousands. If you should add the churches, and the various charitable bodies which also, at bottom, are voluntary associations, the list would be greatly increased. And probably the number of smaller clubs and groups not listed in your grand total would be almost equal to the number set down.

Anyone can form some estimate merely by running through the list of voluntary groups to which he himself belongs. One man, not in any sense a "joiner," living quietly in a quiet suburb, found that his own list ran to twenty-five.

Three Types of Associations.—We might assemble this array of voluntary groups under three general heads or classes: Personal; Public Service; Professional and Business. The classes overlap, and there are plenty of groups not readily to be placed under any of the three heads, but this rough division will do for our immediate purpose. What are the characteristics of these various bodies, and what responsibilities do they entail with respect to speech?

Personal Pleasure or Study.—First, there are the organizations purely personal in aim formed to promote the pleasure or improvement of their members as individuals. There are clubs for every form of recreation. Leisure is organized. There are clubs for swimming, for running, for tennis, for golf—in fact, the clubs devoted to physical exercise are not the least of the land-owners of the United States. Even the time-honored joy of walking in the country has been organized in "hiking clubs."

Men will find the most curious circumstances a bond of sympathy and straightway a club or society will be formed that furnishes entertainment and recreation for many a day—out of

the simple provision of a place and a time for the age-old matching of wits in conversation. A remark on the comforts of being an officer, made by a billeting sergeant of the A. E. F., as he showed a fellow non-com the dining-room assigned to the officers of their company, led to the formation that evening of an unofficial "sergeants' mess," which functioned beautifully whenever that particular infantry company was in billets during and after the fighting. As there was no official sanction for such an organization, the company commander and his aides did not "know" about it. But they treasured many a yarn that escaped the club-room of the sergeants wherever it happened to be, which by some strange power was usually in the *salle à manger* of one of the best cooks among the dames of the village.

So the several hundred second lieutenants assigned to bunks in a great sick bay on board a returning transport, dubbed their quarters "The Shavetail Chateau," and affected to have no use for their friends of other ranks, preferring, as they gave it out, the exclusive atmosphere of their "Chateau."

The desire for self-improvement also brings men and women together in associations for singing, dancing, acting, for study of every variety of subject from bridge to Shakespeare, for discussion of affairs of the day. Many of us do our traveling in quickly organized clubs. And "auld acquaintance" is cherished in school or college alumni associations, all highly organized.

Social Service.—Second, there are the multitude of societies formed to further some sort of public service—charitable and philanthropic bodies of every sort. Here would be classed the churches with their millions of adherents. Here also the great fraternal bodies, numbering perhaps almost as many active adherents as the churches, and to a considerable degree blending the aim of the first two classes; on the one hand providing pleasure and personal benefit for their members, on the other engaged in some form of work for the public.

Professional and Trade Groups.—Third, there are the thousands of professional and trade associations, and the trade unions. Some are organized on the basis of an industry or a profession, like the American Bankers Association, the Modern Language Association, the American Federation of Labor; some on the basis of a particular position or job, like the National Association of Purchasing Agents, the National Association of Cost Accountants; others on the basis of locality, like the Chambers of Commerce, the Main Street Merchants Associations, and so on. These professional and trade groups are not new in type—there were guilds of artisans and merchants in old-time Europe, and secret societies of workers in Arabia and China, long ago. But the modern professional and trade bodies are strikingly new in point of magnitude, in respect to their prominence in the landscape. Today almost every person in active life—laborers, clerks, managers, owners of businesses, even the mothers of the land—will belong to one or more associations or unions connected with his or her vocation.

The labor unions occupy a position, with respect to this class of association, somewhat analogous to the positions of the fraternal bodies with respect to the second class. Their purpose is partly business profit, partly public service, and partly self-training and fellowship.

The Nature of Association Contacts.—In seeking to get an idea of the responsibilities with respect to speech, which develop in connection with such voluntary associations, we may note first the nature of the contacts involved.

With the first class the aims are primarily personal. You join with other members in the sport, study, or opportunity for leisured comfort which the club provides. You are there merely to enjoy yourself, or improve yourself, as an individual. Any organized attention to matters outside the club premises is incidental, confined perhaps to caring for members who may be sick or in trouble, or their families. Your relations are chiefly with other

individual members. You do not often assemble for a club meeting. Official club business is decidedly minor in importance, and is regarded by most members as at best a necessary evil—the less of it the better. There is little need of any discussion of club policy or formulation of club opinion. The ideal of quiet comfort and privacy offered by many clubs of this class was hit off by Mr. Chesterton in his volume entitled “Heretics,” when he said that “a London club used to be a place where you could get a noisy argument; now it is a place where you can get a quiet chop.”

With the second and third classes, attention is directed primarily outside. You belong to these organizations in order to join forces with your fellow-members in getting something done for the public, or getting the public to do something for you—or your organization. In these groups, accordingly, your contacts are with the group as a whole, and with individual members as fellow-soldiers in the association army. Here, therefore, the regular assembly of the members to formulate group opinion as to policy and activities is of prime importance.

There is need of course for maintaining courteous and friendly relations with the other members of the army, because it is a voluntary army and any member of the troop may get up and go home if he sees fit. And the habit of cooperating with others for the same general end brings nearly always a certain amount of enjoyment and personal improvement. All that, however, is a by-product in such an association; you are there to *work* for some outside activity agreed on by the organization as a whole.

Characteristics of the Club Relationship.—If, now, disregarding the differences among the various groups and classes, we try to arrive at a broad view of club and association relations in general, we may note five characteristics which all have in common.

Voluntary Membership.—First of all, membership is voluntary. You are not compelled to join the Golf Club, the Republican

Club, the Masonic Lodge, or the Merchants' Association, or to continue your membership if you tire of it. With some sorts of groups, of course, the pressure to join or to remain may be very strong—in the case of a church which you and your parents before you have attended; the alumni association of your old school; the business association or the trade union of the calling by which you make your living; or indeed any group to which you have belonged for many years and with which many ties have grown up. Nevertheless, you do not usually conceive of association relationship as a permanency. The bond is not like that of home or of your calling. In actual fact, you generally move on from one such connection to others, as your residence shifts or your tastes and ambitions change their direction.

Limited Scope.—In the second place, the relationship is limited in scope. You are a lawyer, exporter, purchasing agent, or what else, all the time, but you are an active member of Kiwanis—say—only at noon on Wednesday, a member of the bowling club only on Monday night.

Homogeneity.—In the third place, however, within the limitations of the club or association aims, the membership is homogeneous. The other members are presumably persons you like, at least as regards one phase of your existence. They belong to that group because they have the same tastes as your own with respect to the activity for which that particular organization exists. This is most true, of course, as regards the organizations of a personal nature. With those for public service or business advancement the bond between yourself and your fellow-members may affect only one narrow interest of your life, yet that one may appear so important that you disregard numerous differences in other points. For example, the bond which unites the parents of a town or district in a local parent-teacher group, or that which unites the rival business houses of a city in the Chamber of Commerce.

Small Size.—In the fourth place, the club or association is generally comparatively small in size. Some city clubs, of course, are very large, and then the situation is different all along the line, but few of the voluntary organizations with which you ally yourself will have as many as a hundred individual members. Ordinarily the number will be even smaller. Even when the group is part of a larger organization, perhaps national in scope, the unit with which your own contacts occur is itself small.

Equality.—Finally, the members are all equal within the club doors. No gradation of rank or authority exists, as in the office or in the family. Each man stands on his own. His thoughts and wishes have only the merit of their own weight. Members holding office at any time are only representatives and delegates of their fellow-members.

In view of the extent of club and association life, and its nature and relationship, what about the contacts to which it gives rise? What are its communication responsibilities?

Nature of Contacts—Conversation.—Obviously one type of contact consists of conversation, more or less informal, with other individual members. In so far as these are on purely personal and incidental topics, they are covered by the maxims applying to social conversation in general, as considered in Chapter XIX. In so far as they concern club aims they resemble somewhat the situations already covered in Chapter VII, though lacking the underlying and compelling element of company policy. With organizations like the church, the fraternal body, the labor union, the sense of moral obligation to forward the purposes of the association and maintain its standards in all contacts may be very strong.

Group Activity.—The peculiar type of contact, however, in club and association life, is participation in group activity. You have to cooperate with the other members in voluntary group action to determine club policy and to carry through club busi-

ness. That involves, first, taking part in meetings—which includes discussing and voting upon matters of club concern, and second, serving as an officer, or as a member of a committee. Here we come upon a type of contact not hitherto touched in this book.

The matters thus to be handled may concern merely the simplest routine of an informal meeting, or the care of a modest clubroom. Or they may involve the determination and management of extended and intricate undertakings—the building of a million-dollar clubhouse; the planning, financing, and execution of a project for town development. At bottom the situation is the same. All the members are presumed to take part in the group action. This group action involves, in committee service, a special type of conversation; in meetings of the whole organization, a form of public speaking.

In some associations, also, still another form of group contact may be involved, namely a definite program of association ritual, or the organized discussion of topics aside from the private business affairs of the club itself. Here again public speaking is involved.

It is, of course, possible for individual members to avoid portions of the group activity, but you do not fully discharge the responsibilities and gain the benefits of membership unless you take your share of all the group activity.

Group Activity in the Three Types of Association.—Obviously the communication problems of different types of organizations will vary according to the nature and size of the group.

With those of the first main class—clubs organized for pleasure and sport, or for the self-improvement of members—group business plays a minor part. The problem here is one of handling the necessary business with minimum effort and time, operating the club without too much waste and without friction from individual whims or jealousies. In many such bodies the entire management is given over to a single executive committee. There

may be no "speechifying" whatever, no organized discussion. The sparsely attended annual meeting for choice of officers may be merely a perfunctory ratification of the slate selected by a nominating committee. The speech requirements of the group may be confined to the work of the executive committee in determining what needs to be done, and then getting the members to do it.

With bodies organized primarily for business purposes, group action in determining and executing organization policy is highly important. Such bodies resemble a League of Nations, a continuing diplomatic congress—even, in some instances, a legislative assembly. Here are two problems. One is that of securing full and clear discussion of association policy and methods, and strict care to preclude unfair advantage to particular factions. The other problem is that of maintaining a degree of personal friendliness and fellowship that will provide a buffer of good-will against the inevitable clash of self-interest. Such organizations demand a careful observance of parliamentary procedure, deft handling of public speaking, and a high degree of skill in every aspect of committee work.

With bodies organized for social service there is need also of skilful committee work and skilful public speech at the meetings. The essential problem, however, is radically different from those in either of the other classes. In such bodies there is always work to be done, yet the driving power alike of compulsion and of personal profit is lacking. Members are only too prone to slight their responsibilities. Officers and interested members have the heavy burden of keeping their associates attentive to club responsibilities. And since this is never easy, the affairs of the organization generally drift into the hands of the few who are active. As a result there is always danger that these few may go off on some tangent, and commit the association to well-intentioned but unsound courses of action. The essential problem in the social service body is to keep everyone actively interested and thereby keep organization action sane.

Two Main Principles.—Because of the basic features of the club relationship, however, and the nature of the contacts developed, there are two main principles which may be recognized with respect to the communication required in such groups: First, the club relationship calls for ability to get along with others without the spur of compulsion. It calls for deftness in using what might be called the exhaust steam of energy—your own and that of others—in getting the association activities carried through. Neither you nor your associates can be expected to take much time from home and business to attend to club affairs. Second, it calls for attention to the technique of committee work and of the informal public speaking required in club gatherings.

Literary and Discussion Clubs.—One type of association which is of especial pertinence in this volume consists of the clubs for exchange of ideas—debating clubs, literary societies, forums, and similar bodies.

Debating societies and literary groups have always flourished in the colleges and schools. The thoroughness of the discipline gained through their agency in many of the smaller American colleges is regarded by many men as the most substantial single element of the training the college years gave them.

Lincoln.—It is interesting to recall in connection with Lincoln that his assiduous private study of the art of “putting things” in boyhood was followed, as he grew to manhood, by active participation in the activities of discussion groups. He cultivated his gift of story-telling; he talked and yarned endlessly in store and tavern. And with the young men of Springfield he had organized a debating society or lyceum. To Herndon, afterward his law partner and later his biographer, his advice was: “You young men get together and form a ‘Rough and Ready Club’ and have regular meetings and speeches. Take in everybody you can get.”

Anyone who is doubtful of the value of debating societies, lit-

erary societies, discussion groups and the like, may well reflect that the immediate product in Lincoln's case was probably not better than the results of our own youthful experience. When you have an hour to spare, read the speech Lincoln delivered in January, 1837, when he was twenty-eight years old, before the Young Men's Lyceum at Springfield, on the "Perpetuation of Our Political Institutions." Then read his address at Cooper Institute, New York, in 1860. Even with those of greatest endowment, it is only gradually that the fluency acquired in the high sounding "oratorical" flights of youth becomes seasoned with the discipline of life and work. As the man matures his style develops into the terse, direct, and compact expression, spoken or written, that does the world's work.

The Women's Clubs.—Of all the agencies at work in the United States for social betterment few have been more broadly influential than the women's clubs. They are active in every state of the union. Practical politicians know the strength of these organizations and are only too glad to seek their aid in policies or projects which they believe will appeal to the women of a community. The politicians are careful also to consider the probable attitude of these clubs toward other projects.

For years, the programs of women's clubs have required definite preparation on the part of the members assigned to speak. An idea of the nature and the effectiveness of this training is given in a recent article by Mrs. Nellie Tayloe Ross, recently governor of Wyoming, in *Good Housekeeping*:

The one great service that women's clubs have rendered American women has been to stimulate the cultivation of natural gifts. Hundreds of women the country over have developed in women's clubs talents worthy of national renown, which, though exercised chiefly for family or friends, constitute an invaluable contribution toward the elevation of our intellectual standards.

To the Cheyenne Women's Club I am indebted for the development of qualities and capacities that helped me meet the demands of public office. It was something like the training men receive in county boards,

municipal councils, and legislative halls. It is an experience that sharpens the wits and develops the gift of expression, particularly of oral expression. In a small club like ours there could be no slothful members. Participation at the time I was taken in was serious business. Year after year we delved into many and deep subjects, ambitiously including the geography, history, literature, art, philosophy and religion of most of the countries on the globe—in fact almost every branch of knowledge, except mathematics, was embraced in our curriculum. . . .

However, it was in that little forum that I received what training in public speaking I carried into the office of Governor. So familiar were we with one another, and yet so restrained when it came to expressing ourselves on our feet! When I first went into the club, the mere act of making a motion almost gave me palpitation of the heart, so in awe was I of those women who were all my seniors and so much wiser than I. In order to overcome this excessive diffidence, I abandoned the practice of reading my paper and undertook to speak on my subject without the aid of written notes. Again the training school for the future demands as yet undreamed of!

Discussion Groups in Other Lands.—The tradition of voluntary discussion and study groups is far older than our American school and college societies, our women's clubs, or even the groups at the crossroads store. It has been particularly strong in English-speaking countries. Discussion clubs multiplied in England during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with the development of general participation in government. The entertaining "Spectator" papers of Addison and Steele have much to say about the clubs for political and social discussion that flourished in London more than two hundred years ago. Two generations later the club idea, seized on by John Wesley and the other founders of Methodism, had much to do with the extraordinary spread of the new church among the masses of the people. Another sturdy English custom, often mentioned in Dickens' works, and flourishing for more than a century, was the local public-house club, where the men of a neighborhood gathered week after week, with chairman and regular forms, for songs, story-telling and discussion.

In Paris and other cities of France the activities of clubs for

political discussion had much to do with the awakening of the nation before the Revolution. Since that time clubs and societies for political and social discussion have spread round the world. In recent years, the Communist experiment in Russia and elsewhere has relied particularly on the activities of little Communist clubs, or "cells."

Adult Education.—In our day the world-wide movement for adult education has brought a fresh development of clubs and societies for serious discussion and self-development. They have multiplied in the Scandinavian countries, in Germany, Great Britain, and more recently in the United States. The lyceum of yesterday is the forum of today; the literary societies are now writers' clubs, poetry groups, dramatic clubs. They bring together young men and young women of different capacities, different schooling and background. Nor are they confined to young and immature persons. Some are exclusive groups of men and women of attainment; others provide a meeting place for youth and age, for enthusiasm and wisdom.

If you belong to such a group make the most of your membership. If you do not, it may be worth your while to look about among your friends and form one, even if it means discarding some connection less directly bearing on the mastery of communication. No other agency can do more to develop readiness and poise in conversation and discussion. It will bring you, in Agnes Repplier's words: "Discussion without asperity, sympathy without fusion, gayety unracked by too abundant jests, mental ease in approaching one another . . . the things which give a pleasant smoothness to the rough edge of life."

CHAPTER XI

COMMITTEE WORK

An Indispensable Mechanism.—It is quite likely that the introduction of the individual to the affairs of a club will come through appointment to a committee. It may be a special committee chosen for a particular task to be completed within a short time. It may be a standing committee performing a certain function regularly through a term of office, a year or two. In either case the new member is introduced to a series of conferences in which some phase of the organization's business is dispatched. The work accomplished by means of the informal committee relation may be of far-reaching character, leading to results that could be effected through no other agency. Almost every town and village in the country owes the enjoyment of certain elements of the blessings of life in a free and peaceful country to the voluntary efforts of committees acting for local improvement associations and the like.

The Committee—Its Nature.—The committee is a device for focusing group intelligence. The idea is founded on the proverbial notion that several heads are better than one. In solving a problem, in determining a policy, even in gathering facts or making an investigation, the single head may miss vital elements in a case. In a review or discussion to which several of differing temperaments, education, and experience contribute, few aspects of a matter are likely to be overlooked.

The committee is a small group. It is not a part of the whole, but rather a representation of the whole. It has time; its attention is easily concentrated; its efforts are definitely assigned to a single task. No formal mechanism hinders second thoughts or

chokes off honest differences of opinion. Second thoughts are always in order. Debate is not limited. In the committee sessions the weaknesses of each viewpoint become apparent. The valuable elements of opposed contributions need not be lost to the final judgment of the group.

Organization of a Committee.—If those who serve on a committee cannot or will not be active in its affairs the work will fall on a few or be left to the chairman. In such an event, there is no group action; the committee is one in name only; it has not really functioned. Its actions cannot be as satisfactory to the club as those which proceed from the cooperative thinking of all who have consented to serve. Earnest men, much sought for committee work, are likely to refuse to be named for a committee when the demands on their time do not permit of active participation in the committee work.

Committees of Action.—The club may appoint a committee to carry out an order or to perform a certain act. Such a group is executive in nature. Committees of this type perform many tasks of the most varied nature to the distinct advantage of the whole organization. Such a committee may be appointed to render a courtesy; to escort a newly elected officer to the chair; to receive a guest; to wait upon a government official; to thank a speaker and escort him to his home or to the railway station. Or it may be a group empowered to act for the club in such matters as the purchase of furniture, the supervision of a club enterprise, the audit and payment of certain accounts. In most cases the instructions to committees of this kind are very explicit. There is little or no deliberation.

Committees of Deliberation.—When the task of a committee is to consider a particular subject and to prepare a report of that consideration, it acts in a deliberative capacity. Voluntary organizations make extensive use of committees of this kind. The question of the need for a new clubhouse is commonly re-

ferred to a committee appointed to weigh and consider such a matter. The decision to build usually results in the appointment of a committee to obtain information as to available sites. In this case inquiry and inspection precede the duty of deliberation. The same committee or others would consider the sites available and recommend one for purchase. A committee would choose an architect. A committee would work with the architect in the preparation of tentative plans. A committee might be detailed for the task of examining the records and inquiring into the responsibility of the building companies that are bidding for the job of construction.

If any member of such a committee were accused of unduly influencing the group in favor of one contractor or another, or of being "interested" in the transaction, the first resort of the organization would be to a committee appointed to inquire into the acts of that member, going so far perhaps as to examine witnesses. Should it appear that the member was unjustly accused and the club decide to make public amends for the usual scandal in such a case, it is quite likely that a committee would be assigned the task of digesting and putting in proper form for action by the whole club, the appropriate pronouncement. In every one of these cases the main purpose of the committee is to prepare and present a report, which is the result of its deliberations.

Standing Committees.—Committees are also differentiated as standing committees, which function for a definite period, and special committees, assigned to a particular service, the completion of which automatically discharges them. The standing committee is in effect a regular part of the organization. Its period of service, perhaps specified in the constitution of the club, usually corresponds with the term of office of the administration, although a standing committee can be established at any time by a vote. It is the accredited deputy of the club, appointed to the task of handling all of the problems that arise in the field of its function. According to its line of duty, it may be either *deliberative* or

executive, or may have discretionary power which makes it both deliberative and executive. Thus the committee on membership considers the applications of prospective members, as they are filed from time to time, and recommends to the club that certain of them be accepted and others rejected. In the course of a year, in an active organization, this committee will "sit" many times to perform a task which the club as a whole could certainly not undertake, and which no one individual could assume.

The Special Committee.—The usual function of the special committee is to handle one matter of immediate concern. In the great majority of cases it is deliberative. Its duration is comparatively brief. It is a special group called into existence on a certain occasion for a single purpose. It is like the *posse comitatus*. Its function is special and does not conflict with the work of the regular officials of the whole group, even when the question referred to it would ordinarily go to a standing committee already in existence. It looks into the strange matter that perplexes the club and makes a clarifying report. It wrestles with a club problem, rendered difficult by conflicting interests and wishes, and recommends a solution. At times it is empowered to make a decision and carry it out. In such a case it has a double function, to deliberate and to act.

You may have been impressed, at various times, with the clear impersonality attained by some well-handled committee in the discharge of its duties. To the somewhat detached observer the efficient committee is a highly satisfactory piece of machinery. But you are not always a detached observer viewing decision and performance. At times you are a member of a committee engaged in its deliberations. There is nothing machinelike about that.

The Committee Chairman

To the end that the several heads may be properly focused and that confusion of assorted individual opinion may be avoided,

the committee is usually placed under the designated leadership of a qualified member of the club as chairman.

The Chairman's Responsibility.—The person chosen for chairman, whether elected by the club or appointed by the president, is usually one who is identified with the project for which the committee is formed, often the person who first introduced the idea. Such a one is likely to be well informed, to see clearly into the matter. The president and the members of the club look to him for results. Frequently he has a voice in the selection of other members of the committee. He is the link between the organization as a whole and the small group chosen for the particular duty. At his call the committee meets for organization; a secretary is chosen; sessions are arranged; a routine is established. The committee must then be put to work and kept at it. Responsibility for this resides in the chairman. By his direction and through his vigilance the problem assigned remains the focal point of the deliberation and action of the group.

The Temptation to "Drive."—So clearly, as a rule, does the chairman recognize his own responsibility for accomplishment that it is hard for him to resist the temptation to "drive." He must resist. He must realize that even the appearance of driving is dangerous. He has to be patient, conciliatory, impersonal. He has to appeal to the wisdom of others, to subordinate himself, contriving to have others "arise and shine." His thoughts will be fixed on the mission of the group. It is his duty to maintain the interest of each individual in the work of the group; to set the example for the others in a salutary neglect of minor irritations. His own self-subordination will be the example for the others. He will find that his suggestions are more readily accepted, the actions or views he favors more likely to gain assent, when they are dissociated from his personality, when they are advanced by others as their own.

The wise chairman will exercise the greatest tact even in the

slightest concerns. At all times, in session and out, he will want to avoid such little slips as speaking of "my committee." The chairman who calls it *his* committee will probably make it just that. Such an attitude in itself will probably limit the value of the work done by the committee. To think of and to speak of "our committee" or at least "the committee" fulfils the first condition of success. Certainly it removes one of the typical causes of resentment that might reduce the sense of pride and responsibility within the group. Power and purpose in such a group are strongly affected by just such intangibles.

Getting Things Done.—The impersonal attitude so valuable to the chairman he can maintain only by the most constant vigilance. He has the responsibility of leading without show of authority. He will make concessions to each member's pet idea or failing, but he will place a limit on indulgence. He has to govern the discussion, to remain arbiter in case of dispute, contriving much, saying little; allowing Jones to foil Brown who is too insistent upon this or that petty point; preparing an opening for Williams to check Jones' ardor; forcing the issue himself only when the business of the committee is at stake.

For the chairman must get things done. He must rescue the meaning from a badly phrased comment. He must check undue haste, guard against unreasonable delay, insist upon the only formal element in committee procedure—that action be taken only on motion or by unanimous consent. It is not easy work. To do well in it requires a high degree of mastery of the art of communication.

The Member's Duty

By common custom a committee, especially a deliberative committee, generally represents in its membership the various elements of the club.

The Make-Up of a Committee.—The committee will consist, normally, of an odd number, including usually one or two new

members, and one or two whose special knowledge or training may seem of particular value to the business in hand. One or two seasoned members who have had the training of previous service and who have shown themselves patient and wise in deliberation and counsel will provide a certain and basic element for the group. They will promote discussion, calling forth different opinions and preserving a necessary calm in the first hot minutes of the wholesome conflicts of judgment that are bound to form part of committee sessions. Under the unobtrusive guidance of the veterans, the others become better acquainted. They will not mistake difference of opinion for what it is not. They will be brought to the view expressed by Sir Thomas Browne in the days of Milton and Bunyan: "I could never divide myself from any man upon the difference of an opinion, or be angry with his judgment for not agreeing in that from which within a few days I might dissent myself."

Committee Procedure.—The formal elements in the procedure of a small working committee are not extensive. It must, however, act as a body. Private meetings of two or three members may be helpful but they are not a proper part of official committee procedure. A quorum or majority of the committee should be present; a secretary should be appointed to record the proceedings; conclusions and decisions not unanimous as the result of conference should be reached by vote in the usual manner, on motion. The final step in the work of the committee is rendered as unanimous, or as a majority opinion expressed as the result of regular vote. Dissenting opinions may be presented as part of the committee report when circumstances indicate the wisdom and justice of this course.

Good Manners Constitute Order.—The parliamentary rules that govern the meeting of the club are too formal for the purposes of its miniature counterpart, the committee meeting. Order and expedition are just as desirable but they are to be secured by simple means. Any too rigid adherence to rule might hamper free

discussion and thus defeat the very purpose of the group. In this connection you will be interested in the very practical little book by Professor Sheffield, already referred to,¹ prepared for the Workers' Educational Bureau, affiliated with the American Federation of Labor. It is a volume that might well be in the hands of everyone who has to serve on committees.

The shortcomings instantly checked in formal meetings by the rap of the chairman's gavel are just as much out of order in the less rigid atmosphere of the committee. Here, however, it is the little arts of social skill on which the chairman must rely for preserving order. For a committee calls forth and enlivens all the elements of the art of communication. An apt remark, a question as to meaning, an illustration, a mere change of countenance may serve to interrupt a digression, or to avoid an unpleasant clash. Careful attention to the rights of others, the essence of good manners on any occasion, is the prime condition for the smooth working of a committee.

Nowhere have the principles which apply to participation in committee work been better set forth than in a passage by a great English clergyman, Cardinal Newman, in a volume of lectures delivered some seventy years ago.² In a description of "A Gentleman" he says :

He is mainly occupied in merely removing the obstacles which hinder the free and unembarrassed action of those about him; and he concurs with their movements rather than takes the initiative himself. His benefits may be considered as parallel to what are called comforts or conveniences in arrangements of a personal nature: like an easy chair or a good fire, which do their part in dispelling cold and fatigue, though nature provides both means of rest and animal heat without them. The true gentleman in like manner carefully avoids whatever may cause a jar or a jolt in the minds of those with whom he is cast;—all clashing of opinion, or collision of feeling, all restraint, or suspicion, or gloom, or resentment; his great concern being to make every one at their ease and at home. He has his eyes on all his company; he is tender towards the bashful, gentle towards the distant, and merciful towards the absurd;

¹ See page 96.

² John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University*, Longmans, Green & Co.

he can recollect to whom he is speaking; he guards against unseasonable allusions, or topics which may irritate; he is seldom prominent in conversation, and never wearisome. He makes light of favors while he does them, and seems to be receiving when he is conferring. . . . If he engages in controversy of any kind, his disciplined intellect preserves him from the blundering discourtesy of better, perhaps, but less educated minds; who, like blunt weapons, tear and hack instead of cutting clean, who mistake the point in argument, waste their strength on trifles, misconceive their adversary, and leave the question more involved than they find it. He may be right or wrong in his opinion, but he is too clear-headed to be unjust; he is as simple as he is forcible, and as brief as he is decisive. Nowhere shall we find greater candor, consideration, indulgence: he throws himself into the minds of his opponents, he accounts for their mistakes. He knows the weakness of human reason as well as its strength, its province and its limits.

Once the committee has convened, serious attention to the work assigned should be the object of each member. Flashes of wit or fugitive gleams of humor often serve to lighten the task. So long as they are incidental and fleeting they are in good taste. They should not be extended. The occasional sparks struck off by alert minds in free contact will relieve the serious temper of the committee meeting without disturbing it. The conscious joke, however, no matter how new and lively, is out of place. It consumes some of the "common time" for which every member has made some sacrifice. The attempt to gain practice as a joker or to shine as a wit at the expense of the project that brings the members together in committee, marks a man as temperamentally unsuited to such work.

Committee Responsibility.—Because time is so valuable every member should be prompt in appearance at the place of meeting. The situation is the same as in the conferences discussed in Chapter VII. The complexities of emotion even in a small group are made greater and more difficult of adjustment by delay. When you accept appointment to a committee you tacitly pledge the service required. And every member should stay through the meeting. For one to get up and leave is to take a

certain advantage of his colleagues, whose affairs are presumably as important as his own. Such action is sure to have a bad effect on the meeting. If it does not prove a signal for a general break-up it may destroy the disposition of the group to go on with the work. Once the charmed circle of free consultation of mind with mind is broken, there is an end of group thought for that occasion.

For the essential characteristic of the well-functioning committee is responsibility. The machinery of a regular club meeting might grind an evening through to failure so far as accomplishment of this or that task is concerned, but the small representative group has a sense of responsibility. While controversy and impulses of the moment will inevitably sway discussion and at times prolong it, the purpose in hand will not suffer. For there is in small groups charged with a mission a characteristic rarely exhibited in whole organizations, namely, a certain *judicial* responsibility. It is a spur to accomplishment. Men on a committee charged with the duty of determining a course of action for a club will weigh facts and consider opinions with intense care in order to reach sound judgments. They will test decisions before presenting them for ratification by the group as a whole.

Deliberation.—To weigh facts, to consider opinions, to reason about them in order to reach sound judgments, is to deliberate. That is peculiarly the business of the committee. The duty of the individual member is to consider the matter, to meditate and reflect, and to express the significant results of that solo process for the benefit of the others. When several do this, they confer, or consult; they may debate. When this process is carried through cautiously, without haste, and with a view to finding a satisfactory solution of the problem in hand, it is deliberation.

When you serve on a committee you will wish to meditate and reflect in as capable a fashion as you can. You look at the problem with your intellect, to get a view of it. You analyze it; you recall the nature and purpose of the organization; you esti-

mate its present status; you review the circumstance that disclosed the problem; you attempt to state the problem in various ways; you recollect the instruction of the president when he turned the matter over to your committee; you call to mind any subsequent directions the committee has received; you regard facts; you make allowance for conditions; and you distinguish in this process the considerations that as it seems to you ought to govern the solution towards which the committee has to work. You introduce at suitable turns in the discussion the considerations of importance as they appeal to your intellect. You may see ahead to a possible solution but you refrain from expressing it too early. For by its very nature, the committee is organized for free consultation, not for formal debate; for cooperative or group "thinking through," not for competitive thinking. The aim is not to see who can first guess an answer. Rather it is to find the materials satisfactory to all, out of which, by the labor of all, a trustworthy answer can be wrought.

Function of the Individual in Deliberation.—To fit appropriate expressions of the results of your thought into the discussion as it grows, is the proper function of the individual. Sound thought, straight reasoning is obviously the substance of significant contributions to the work of the group. But the sound thinking goes for nought if it is not transmitted. It is not your mental process that you wish to reveal to your fellow committee men but the "considerations" which your thought has revealed as important factors in the task of deliberation. You will strive to cast your thought in words, not for your own sake but for the purpose of communicating it to the other individuals who are seated about you and engaged in the discussion. No isolated expression will do. The idea you wish to present must be accommodated to the direction and flow of the discussion taking place.

Your statement, moreover, if you wish others to understand it, must be complete and connected. Otherwise you cannot satis-

factorily present your judgments. In the deliberations of home or office, where there is an element of recognized authority, a single remark of approval or disapproval will often serve the purpose. But the member of a committee has to satisfy the relationship that governs his activity. Even more than in the business conference he is dealing with presumptive equals. It is only by his consideration for the views of others, his tolerance and his modesty that he may hope to gain a hearing for his own ideas.

A Medium for the Thoughts of Others.—It is not enough to present the results of your own thought. Conference demands more than that. The amount of talking a man does and his usefulness to the committee are not necessarily in direct ratio. It is your duty to be a medium and a transformer for the thoughts of others. The art of tactful inquiry, skill in bringing out the idea which may be somewhat clouded by the feeling of another, already discussed in Chapter VIII, is particularly useful in committee work. It is of great value, also, to be able to discover and develop new lines of thought suggested by the remarks of your colleagues. Often the unobtrusive inquirer may be the most valuable member of a committee. His art is that of Socrates. He who is a master of questions is perforce a master of communication. The quiet follower of Socrates frequently renders another service to the committee. His timely interruptions, too natural to give offense, too apt to be ignored, neatly put down the too aggressive individual whose convictions threaten to monopolize the attention of the group and the superior person who desires to triumph in little points.

Self-Indulgence Destructive.—For in committee work the individual's pleasure can be gratified only at great expense to the whole group. If the group is to think, it must remain a meeting of minds. Conflict of minds may lead to better thought, but conflict of personal viewpoints and tempers is sure to stifle thought. When Jones propounds in earnest mood that which is obviously fraught with incoherencies and omissions, it is only too easy for

Brown, Williams and White to pounce upon the individual flaws in his exposition. If they yield to the temptation to "proofread" they will choke off his thought and irritate him. He may retaliate and the meeting will become the scene of petty controversy or worse. As a matter of fact, Brown, Williams and White have one duty to perform in such an instance. It is to encourage Jones to develop his thought; to aid him in giving it complete expression. Brought tactfully to supply omissions and to restate his contentions he may make a valuable contribution to the deliberation.

The Art of Cooperation.—The man who can rescue ideas from partial or improper expression and give them effective expression is very useful on committees—and everywhere else in civilized society under the sun. The accomplished and experienced man places at the disposal of the committee all of his intellect and none of his sentiments, feelings or prejudices. He never forgets the purpose for which he and the others are assembled. He has learned to let pass the chance for a trifling display of superior knowledge; he has developed a big-dog scorn of petty barking. Therefore, he is sure of a respectful hearing for the objections he finds it necessary to make. In the midst of discussion he does not concern himself with errors too trifling to require immediate correction. He knows that a needless correction may be a great impertinence. Palpable errors will be caught. He is content to devote himself to the sufficiently difficult task of seeking from the words of others what is in their minds and of striving to turn what he finds in those minds as well as in his own to the general account.

CHAPTER XII

MEETINGS—PARLIAMENTARY PRACTICE

Requirements of Group Action.—The business of a club or association is conducted, with final authority, by an assemblage of the members under a president or chairman, according to an order or code specified in its charter or constitution and based on parliamentary practice established by custom.

The object is the same as with a committee, to secure group consideration of matters to be decided and group action. As the number of persons involved is larger, however, than on most committees, discussion cannot be carried on satisfactorily by means of conversation between individuals. When fifteen persons are involved—certainly when there are twenty—the procedure of conversation results in waste of time and confusion. To get ideas and proposals before the group as a whole necessitates a procedure on the part both of speakers and of listeners which is radically different from any so far considered in this volume. To avoid confusion and give everyone a fair chance to secure the attention of the group, those who desire to speak must take their turn. Those who listen must keep quiet and let each speaker have his say. If you do not know with certainty the code your association has adopted, your attempt to take a part in the discussion may lead to minor embarrassments as well as to failures in communication.

Parliamentary Procedure.—Whatever the aim or nature of your association, you will find that the working code by which its meetings are conducted is a condensation and adaptation from one of the well-known manuals of parliamentary procedure,

Cushing's "Manual of Parliamentary Practice,"¹ or Robert's "Rules of Order."² These manuals themselves, however, are merely the codification of traditional custom. They are based upon Congressional practice, in particular upon the established usage of the House of Representatives. That in turn was derived in the Colonial period from the practice developed during many generations in the British House of Commons.

Strictly speaking, there is no written law of parliamentary procedure. Any assembly has the right to draw up its own rules, as in fact is done by each branch of the national legislature at each session. When the national House of Representatives or the Senate organizes and elects its officers, it appoints a Rules Committee to draw up and recommend the special code of procedure by which the body will operate during the session. Practically, however, the general principles of correct procedure are set forth in the manuals and men adhere as a matter of course to the rules there set down. The vast majority of organized associations simply adopt a code based upon one of the recognized manuals. In all cases the "great purpose of all rules and forms is to subserve the will of the assembly rather than to restrain it; to facilitate, and not to obstruct, the expression of their deliberate sense." These words are from the original edition of Cushing's "Manual of Parliamentary Procedure," published in 1844. The current revision of this authoritative work ought to be in your possession. If you also have Robert's "Rules of Order" in an up-to-date edition, you will be provided with the recognized sources of authority for your conduct at any public meeting as well as in the sessions of your own group.

Skill in Assembly.—Mere knowledge of the parliamentary code, however, will not necessarily render a man skilful in assembly. There are, unfortunately, persons who take pride in being accounted parliamentarians, who will split hairs so

¹ Luther S. Cushing. The New Cushing's Manual of Parliamentary Law and Practice, revised and enlarged by Charles Kelsey Gaines; Thompson Brown Co.

² Henry M. Robert, Rules of Order, Revised, Scott Foresman and Co.

zealously over matters of precedence, over one interpretation of a rule or another, that often the very purpose of the whole code is neglected. Stenographic records of meetings are apt to reveal a large volume of utterances not at all related to the proper business of the groups assembled. The meeting itself, and the code that governs it, are merely means to furthering the purpose of the group.

The object of a meeting is action by the group through a process of orderly consideration and decision, with respect to proposals submitted to it. This involves three steps:

1. Submission of each proposal in the form of a definite declarative sentence—a *motion*.
2. Orderly *discussion* of the motion.
3. Decision to adopt or not to adopt the motion—that is, to agree or not to agree with the proposal—by means of a *vote* of the members.

Parliamentary procedure is designed to provide rules of practice for carrying through these three steps.

In order to carry them through expeditiously and impartially it is necessary to have a designated presiding officer, a chairman or president, to see that the procedure is observed. Members who desire to present motions to the meeting are required to address them to this presiding officer or "chair" and obtain from him the right to "the floor." Members who wish to discuss motions are required also to address their remarks to the "chair" and to abide by his rulings as to the order and form of their speeches. Members not speaking are required to observe the "chair's" directions as to quiet and decorum. When a vote is taken the "chair" has the duty of formally "putting," or stating the motion to the group, or of having it read by the secretary, and announcing the result of the vote.

The Simple Unit of Procedure.—The substance of normal parliamentary procedure may be grouped, therefore, under four heads:

1. Recognition of a member desiring to present a motion.
2. Presentation of the motion by the member.
3. Discussion.
4. Vote.

The meeting of any organization resolves itself into a succession of applications of this procedure, generally according to a plan previously determined.

In most organizations the *order of business* is stated in "by-laws." It is the duty of the chairman to see that this order is adhered to. Satisfactory conduct of a meeting depends in very large measure upon his impartiality, tact and energy.

The Duty of the Chairman.—Obviously, the chairman must be impartial. His sole function is to direct the machinery of the meeting so that it may serve its proper purpose. He may not himself take part in the discussion. If he desires to speak upon a matter presented to the group, parliamentary procedure requires that he call upon another member to take his place as chairman, and himself for the time become merely a member and subject to the rules governing discussion. As chairman he must be merely a referee of the discussion of other persons. In giving the privilege of the floor to speakers, therefore, the chairman is in honor bound to recognize speakers in the order in which they make known to him their desire to speak—he must play no favorites.

Naturally there will be many times when it is difficult to decide which one of two or three individuals first signified the wish to have the floor. The common courtesies of any gathering must be the chairman's guide in such a contingency. He will recognize, therefore, the eldest of the individuals before the others, or in a mixed group the woman before the man. Or he will decide in favor of the stranger or new member or the one not of his own immediate acquaintance. It will also be his duty throughout the meeting to distribute equitably the privileges of the floor among those representing diverse views. At any stage

of the discussion he will recognize one who has not spoken at all in preference to those who *have* spoken, and he will be performing the function of his office when he fails to recognize a person who wants to "hog" the floor.

But, on the other hand, the chairman is charged with a responsibility for keeping the machinery moving, for seeing that the meeting does not merely mark time. This calls for energy and tact. Very often the fundamental purposes of a group are obstructed because the chairman is not master of the group machinery given into his charge, and allows the slow progress of dull routine to waste precious time. That is particularly apt to be the case with associations the meetings of which are infrequent. It happens far too often that a man of personal standing and energy, who runs his own business with brisk competence, makes an utterly inadequate chairman, either because he fails to realize the responsibilities of the position or because of ignorance of the technique of expediting group business.

At the winter meeting of the alumni association of a certain college, men from many corners of a great metropolitan area, who had not seen each other for a year or more, gathered at 8:45 and sat uneasily through an extended program of routine business matters requiring little group decision. Two lengthy and dull speeches, wholly unnecessary, on a minor point relating to the form of association records, encroached still further upon the evening of fellowship to which all had been looking forward. When, after they had sat thus from 9:00 till 11:25, the chairman announced that a collation would be served in the Gold Room, they sighed with resignation and ran for their trains.

Duty of Individual Members.—The theory of parliamentary procedure calls for a relation of impersonality in the conduct of the meeting. Discussion between members is conducted, theoretically, through the medium of the chairman. If you desire to speak you would not think of omitting the little formality of securing the floor by the customary method, rising in your place

and addressing the presiding officer by his usual title, "Mr. Chairman," and of waiting for the customary response, "Mr." before proceeding with your business. You know that to speak without thus gaining formal recognition is "out of order."

When you have occasion to interrupt a speaker you present your request to the chairman in set form: "Mr. Chairman, may I rise to a point of information? May I ask the gentleman whether" If you think the discussion is straying from the subject, or that the subject itself is not proper to be considered you appeal to the chair with "Mr. Chairman, I rise to a point of order" When you have occasion to refer to another member you use the third person—"The gentleman who preceded me," "The gentleman who introduced the motion," and so forth.

Formality Serves a Practical Purpose.—This impersonal procedure is perhaps the outgrowth of gatherings in which the delegates were not personally acquainted—where, as in a legislative body, they represented different parts of the country. Its formality may appear unnecessary and even absurd with informal local groups, the members of which are intimately acquainted. Nevertheless, the form of impersonality is decidedly useful. It aids in keeping order, maintaining the forms of civility which are necessary for group business to be continually transacted. A challenge that might be sharp and irritating if couched in the second person, is apt to take a form that is less provocative when translated into third person phrasing. The fact that Jones must address Brown through the chair, and Brown must reply in the same mode, gives the chairman an opportunity to relieve tension by an interjected word of comment. It is easier to keep the differences of opinion which may arise in a discussion from developing into personal clashes or quarrels which might seriously hinder group business.

The custom of impersonality in the conduct of group meetings has become practically universal among the English-speaking peoples. Its forms were regularly observed in the old-time Eng-

lish public-house clubs. In the United States the minstrel show of our fathers' time was an application of the same parliamentary forms to purposes of entertainment. The Interlocutor was the chairman, and the End Men addressed their jokes and stunts not to one another, or directly to the audience, but to the Interlocutor as intermediary.

The ingrained respect for parliamentary forms among all habituated to public meetings sometimes shows itself, indeed, in surprising ways. Some years ago in a small country church the question of putting a new roof on the church came up for discussion, at the Wednesday evening prayer-meeting. Most of the members realized, though with regret, that the roof had to be fixed, but one of the deacons, the richest man in town and somewhat tight-fisted, was believed to be opposed.

The minister was acting as chairman of the meeting. Desiring if possible a unanimous showing, he called upon one after another of the members known to be favorable, and passed over the formidable deacon. Finally he said, with a glance at the clock, "As the hour is growing late, I will now ask Brother Smith to dismiss us with prayer." Deacon Smith rose and drawled out: "I had intended to offer some remarks on the subject of the church roof, but I'll throw my remarks into the form of a prayer."

Ignorance of Custom a Handicap.—For intelligent participation in a meeting nothing can take the place of first-hand knowledge. To obtain a reliable grasp of the essentials of parliamentary procedure, the "standard practice" governing motions, discussion, and voting, the one best way is to provide yourself with a copy of Cushing's "Manual" or Robert's "Rules" and study what it says, just as you would study for yourself what an automobile rule book says. These manuals are not long. Their statements are admirably definite and very clearly arranged. Seeing for yourself just what they say, and what they do not say, will give you a comprehensive picture of the whole scheme of

parliamentary practice and the principles underlying it that no abbreviation or "simplified" version can supply.

Should you find the "Rules of Order" or the "Manual of Procedure" difficult in any way, you will find help in Robert's³ "Parliamentary Practice," a handy volume in which full illustration is given for every point in common parliamentary practice. If you desire, also, a convenient summary of the main features of procedure, for quick reference, you will find a useful outline in the last pages of "Everyday Public Speaking" by Harry J. Burtis.⁴ In the present discussion the purpose is, not to attempt such an outline of the rules, but merely to call attention to certain matters relating to the spirit of the procedure.

Motions.—First as to motions: Since the purpose in a club meeting is action, the business of the meeting is not going on unless the members are discussing a matter formally presented in the shape of a motion. The individual's contributions to a meeting will consist either of the presentation of motions or of reasoning about motions.

By theory, the motion which a member presents is the conclusion to which he has come in his thought as to what action the body should take. Actually, of course, his opening sentences may be preliminary to definite statement of his point. Well-thought-out motions are usually presented to the meeting with preliminary remarks leading up to the motion itself.

You will find it helpful to note that the motions which come before any meeting may be classified as to function in two groups or types. For convenience we may term them content or main motions, and machinery or incidental motions. The first class consists of motions directly embodying proposals of action by the organization with reference to the *business* under consideration—for example, a motion that the organization purchase some article or undertake some piece of work. The second class consists of motions which are connected with the machinery of the meet-

³ Henry M. Robert, *Parliamentary Practice*, The Century Co.

⁴ Harry J. Burtis, *Everyday Public Speaking*, The Ronald Press Company.

ing, such as a motion to amend a motion already before the group; a motion to "lay on the table," or a motion to adjourn—and others as listed in the manuals.

"Incidental" Motions.—Actually, most of the difficulties in meetings are concerned with the handling of the second class of motions, those which have to do with the machinery of the meeting. It is with reference to these that the more intricate and less familiar features of procedure have been developed. The course of group action, even when the spirit is willing, is not always serene. The machinery has to provide for contingencies. The human tendency to stray from the point leads individuals to interject irrelevant matter into the discussion. If the remedies are, as frequently happens, not familiar to the members of the group, the unskilful effort to apply them may aggravate confusion. If, as sometimes is the case, there are members who enjoy technicalities and intricacies, or who for their own purposes desire to block some action toward which the meeting seems to be tending, these incidental motions may cause a great deal of trouble.

Now the only sure cure for such trouble is full familiarity with the manual, so that you can see clearly the meaning and effect of the incidental motions proposed at any stage.

Safeguards of Discussion.—A skilful chairman can relieve a tangled situation by declaring the speaker "out of order." Or, the attentive individual member may call the chair's attention to the fact by "rising to a point of information," to inquire of the chair the reason for the introduction of what seems to be extraneous matter. On such an occasion, after you have duly obtained recognition from the chair, you will continue with an appropriately courteous question: "May I ask whether or not the gentleman is speaking to the subject?" and so forth. When you have stated your point, briefly, the chairman will take action on your point, or will call for action on it by the house, and the business is carried forward. If the point of information affects

the interrupted speaker and is not sustained, the chair will instruct the speaker to continue.

Another device for keeping discussion within proper bounds and for generally checking the vocal activities of the meeting, is the "point of order." By this device the chairman accords the privilege of the floor to one who interrupts the discussion with the oft-echoed phrase, "Point of order, Mr. Chairman," to point out the fact that the speaker is off the question, or that the subject or the manner of his utterance is a violation of the rule of order—the code—of the association meeting.

Or, to counteract a general tendency to talk off the question, an individual member may call for a vote on "the previous question." If such a call is duly seconded the chair will have to honor it and take a vote. If there is no general desire on the part of the group to continue the discussion, this device will bring about a decision without further loss of time.

As the manuals will tell you, a point of order or a point of information is a valid excuse for recognition of an individual by the chair, in the middle of a speech by someone else. Often questions are propounded which after some discussion appear not easily to be decided. When it becomes apparent that the group can make no satisfactory decision upon the matter at that meeting, steps must be taken to dispose of the discussion without further loss of time. This is accomplished in various ways.

1. The original maker, with the consent of the second, may withdraw his motion. This is the simplest and most effective means of disposal.
2. A member may offer a motion to lay the matter on the table. Properly seconded and passed this also disposes of the matter.
3. A member may present a motion to postpone consideration of the matter to a future meeting, specifying in his motion, if he desires, the particular date.

Sound "Content" Motions Reduce Machinery.—More important, after all, than even the fullest command of the resources

of machinery motions is the constant realization of the following fact: In almost any case of confusion or wrangling in a meeting, if you trace back the difficulty you are likely to find that it grew out of some defect in the underlying content motion. That motion was perhaps unsuitable in substance, the result of poorly reasoned conclusions, even though well expressed. Or, on the other hand, the content motion, although representing a conclusion that was entirely appropriate, may have been poorly worded as a motion.

The more reasonable and substantial the thought presented in a content motion, and the better worded it is, the fewer will be the occasions for machinery motions. It is in meetings of those little expert in procedure that most trouble is found with machinery motions. Here as elsewhere, "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing." The wording of a content motion is worthy of a good deal of thought before the meeting. It is for this reason that some associations require that motions be written out and copies handed to the secretary when they are offered in the meeting.

When the members of a group are in general well acquainted with parliamentary procedure, and conscious of it as a mere instrument, progress of the meeting is apt to be smooth and relatively rapid.

Management of Discussion.—If you have a good motion, carefully thought out and worded, the discussion is apt to run smoothly. Yet even so, the resulting conflict of opinion may now and then lead to an *impasse* of one kind or other, and serious delay, unless some of the members make skilful use of the incidental machinery motions. Thus it will be a waste of time to contend over a motion on the floor, when the opposition might be removed entirely by making a slight change in the wording of the original motion. This is accomplished by a *motion to amend the motion*. You have to be careful in making the amendment (1) to take account of the logical situation of the discussion—to

suggest a change that can be accepted by the meeting; (2) to see that the wording of the amendment is properly adjusted to the form of the original motion, so that the "motion as amended" will make sense and be free from ambiguity. When the good of the organization is the sole objective of the minds gathered together, it is easy to achieve group discussion by means of a well-considered amendment to a motion not fully acceptable. When individual interests or personal feelings are allowed to overshadow the purpose of the group, the way of amendments will be hard. Motions will become numerous—one after another presented and killed. It will be hard to reach any decision and if a decision is reached there will be a discontented minority. The machinery of the meeting was not intended for any such misuse.

The attempt on the part of the unskilful to reword a motion, or make it more satisfactory, by amending an amendment is a fertile source of trouble. There is parliamentary sanction for this procedure. But in most bodies it is far more practical for the original mover to withdraw the motion, after obtaining proper consent, so that he or another may offer a new motion incorporating the changes desired by the house.

One final caution. Do not try to work into the conduct of your meeting all the parliamentary machinery you can. Rather, get along with as little of it as you can. The simplest procedure is the best, so long as the essentials of recognized custom are observed.

The Spirit Is More Than the Letter.—The letter of parliamentary practice must be supplemented and interpreted by the right spirit. Naturally there will be differences of opinion in any good meeting. But there need be no show of personal animus or antipathy. If a man wants to be discourteous and ill-natured, the employment of forms that are technically correct will not mitigate his offense. On the other hand, the patterns of recognized procedure serve the courteous person admirably. The formality imposed by parliamentary rules supplies an easy safe-

guard against hasty or untactful actions or words to which all of us at times are prone. If a man wants to be decent to his fellows the regulations will help him at every point.

One of the most interesting of the numberless professional groups of the country is the American Executives Association, whose membership is composed of the secretaries of trade associations. The meetings of this group, where every "private in the ranks" is himself a "general"—intimately familiar in his own trade body with the minutest details of parliamentary practice—are said to move with phenomenal rapidity and ease. The time wasted in mere machinery action is negligible; the members have practically all of the meeting time for essential business.

CHAPTER XIII

FIRST STEPS IN PUBLIC SPEAKING—TAKING THE PLUNGE

Characteristics of Group Address.—Addressing a group of twenty persons or more, however informal the conditions, involves a definite technique. If your remarks are to be intelligible and interesting to all present, it becomes necessary to present them in a manner which differs somewhat from ordinary talk alike in delivery, language, and thought-arrangement. It is not conversation but group address, a form of public speaking. The fact that you are addressing not an individual, or a half-dozen, but a group together, that you desire all of them to grasp your idea simultaneously, calls for a manner of presentation which differs from conversation in four points.

Delivery More Striking Than in Conversation.—First, you have to speak louder than in ordinary conversation, and more distinctly, so that those who are seated some distance away may hear. Generally you must stand on your feet, so that all may see. If the group is large, you must also speak more slowly than in conversation, just as the movie operators allow their large audiences plenty of time to read the captions of their pictures.

Need of Simplicity and Coherence.—Secondly, you must couch your thought in words and in a form of arrangement which all your hearers can grasp readily. When conversing with an individual it is natural to include points—items—expressions—which are specially appropriate to him alone, the more intimate, indeed, the better. When talking to a group such individual touches are hindrances, because not generally intelligible. It is

necessary to find some common denominator of knowledge which applies to the group as a whole. The words, and likewise the matters referred to, or alluded to, must be such as all present can readily understand. Statements must be on the whole shorter and the arrangement more simple than is necessary in conversation with an individual, because the members of the group will vary in quickness of apprehension. If you express your thought in complex thought-units or intricate arrangement, some of your listeners will fail to understand and be left behind. You must therefore treat the subject with more directness than is necessary in conversation. You must keep to the middle of the road and avoid digressions and asides.

Completeness.—Third, your talk is expected to be complete, not fragmentary as in conversation. The conditions of a gathering make it impracticable to have speakers jumping up to utter single remarks—such a practice would confuse the audience, as it takes a moment or two for an audience to focus attention upon a speaker. Therefore, when you arise, the audience expects to allow you to say your say without interruption. Moreover, when you claim the attention of a group you are presumed to have “something to say”—that is, to have your thought in mind in complete and orderly form. No one is expected to take the time of the group merely to explore the subject with the view of finding out what he thinks about it, as is constantly the case in conversation.

A Message—The Right to Speak.—Fourth, as you are presumed to “have something to say,” you are expected to put yourself forward, to speak with some positiveness, to sing a solo. Conversation, as repeatedly noted in preceding chapters, is a two-part game. Unobtrusiveness is of its essence. But when one asks others to remain silent and listen to him, he is presumed to have a message and he is conceded the right to utter it. Pretentiousness and exaggeration, of course, are wrong, but he is expected to assert himself, to take the lead, while speaking.

These four features, which exist on the most informal occasions of group address, combine to form a type of speech which is used comparatively little in the relations of professional or business life and not at all in the contacts of private life, with family and intimates. Some of the features which give to conversation its chief power and charm—unexpectedness, fragmentariness, unobtrusiveness—are hindrances, not helps, in the most simple and rudimentary address to a group.

Informal Group Address versus the Speech to a General Audience.—Now, with respect to this informal group address, there are three other significant facts, all of them highly significant and all very generally overlooked. A clear grasp of these three facts will help immensely in our further study of communication.

The first fact to be noted is that the four features just enumerated mark the informal group communication of club or association as essentially a form of public speaking. Basically, the procedure in addressing a club gathering of twenty persons, however informal and intimate the ties which unite them, is the same in nature as the procedure of the public address to a great audience of strangers.

The second fact, however, is that in spite of the basic similarity of nature between the informal talk to an organization group and the formal address to a large general audience, the detail differences between the two types of public speaking are many and great. They are greater even than the differences between the conversation of social intercourse and that of business. Informal address to an organization group—to your own “gang”—is practically a different activity from formal address to a general audience. Multitudes of persons are highly expert at the first type who never attempt the second, and who would disclaim all power of succeeding therewith.

Nevertheless, it is to be remembered that mastery of the informal public speaking appropriate to an organization group is a

sure start on the road to success with the formal speaking for general audiences. Beyond question, this is the course that has been followed by nearly everyone who has won distinction on the public platform.

Value of Cultivation of Informal Address.—In the course of a speech at an Elks' Flag Day celebration at Elwood, Indiana, the Hon. James J. Davis, Secretary of Labor, remarked:

Joining the various fraternal organizations meant much to me. My debt to them is large. I loved the spirit of brotherhood that they exemplified, the genial comradeship that I experienced in such generous measure. These organizations are a great school for aspiring spirits. They teach one the methods of parliamentary procedure; one learns within them how to think in debate while on one's feet, and how to preside acceptably over a public meeting. It was in such organizations as the one which I am now addressing that effective public speakers were made, whose voices echo today from the platforms and halls of legislation.

A Type Little Discussed in Books.—Informal group address has long been established as a distinct medium; it was common in primitive village life, in the companies and guilds of the Middle Ages, and in the town meetings of our own earlier history; it is universally practiced in the thousands of voluntary organizations of today. It has a technique that is definite and simple, mastery of which is within the reach of anyone who applies himself carefully. Yet, strangely enough, the technique has not often been written down; you will find hardly anything about it in the books on public speaking. As with the technique of ordinary conversation, it is so close to us that we take it for granted.

The Most Important Form of Public Speaking.—We may well be astonished, however, when we stop to realize the universality and potency of this simple form of public speaking. Not only is it the commonest form of group communication, but beyond question the most important. Those "organization speeches" deal with practical matters; they express vital convictions and judgments. The decisions to which they lead directly

affect the condition and activities of the individuals composing the group. The public address of a formal character, however strongly it may impress the listeners, does not often affect conduct or change the conditions under which men work and live. The formal address issues a challenge, sounds a keynote, raises a standard, but it does not in itself produce results; its ideas have to be "stepped down" before their purpose can be realized. This "stepping down" process takes place in just such informal club meetings and group gatherings as those most of us attend. It is in the average club group that public opinion is made and modified, in the same way as the laws are made and modified by our representatives in the halls of government, and by very much the same machinery.

Labor Groups.—Small groups are favorable to thought. The principle that gives the committee its uses is apparent here also. The labor groups have realized it and the whole trend of the workers' organizations today is to develop group activities. Many of the plans for workers' education involve the group unit, which is by turns an element in a local labor union, a study circle, a discussion group, a lecture audience and a social club. Not the least of the educational advantages of this kind of organization go to the group leaders, as noted in the speech of Secretary Davis just quoted.

Religious Groups.—The use of this principle by American labor groups is an outgrowth of its use in the religious field. As already noted, one of the cardinal features of the great Methodist organization built by the Wesleys a hundred and fifty years ago was the provision for gathering the members of a congregation into permanent little groups, or "classes," for constant study and discussion of matters of faith under group leaders of their own number. The training received by workingmen in these religious groups was later applied in their trade union activities. A very large proportion of the great labor leaders of England in

the nineteenth century began as class leaders of Methodist groups in the north of England.

It is upon the same clear conception of the possibilities for influencing men in small groups that the "cell" system of the Russian communists, as explained in a manual of instruction issued by the Third Internationale, is based.

The Legion and the Bonus.—Our own history is not lacking in concrete evidences of the results of the operation of this principle. The anti-slavery societies of the eighteen-thirties furnish one example. The case of the American Legion and the Soldier Bonus is more recently in point. The first shots in the campaign for the bonus were battery salvos for the big guns of political orators outside the Legion ranks. Men with big voices talked much. There was no immediate action. The nearest thing to a tangible result was a vote on the bonus taken in an attempt to complete a nation-wide canvass of the Legion. The Posts voted in the negative. Discussion was continued in many quarters; certain representatives of the people had declared that the soldiers ought to have a bonus. Interest was roused in many parts of the land. The matter was discussed in the daily press. Legion Posts were called upon to make it a subject of discussion again. The bonus idea was again rejected. Discussion went on. Wherever ex-service men gathered, the subject was introduced. They came together most readily and most often in the small rural communities. The third vote on the bonus revealed widespread support in the country districts. In cities and large centers it was rejected but not as whole-heartedly as before. Opinion was almost evenly divided, and it was not long before the demand for another ballot was satisfied with a positive vote that placed the American Legion on record as in favor of a cash bonus for ex-service men.

The Prohibition Amendment.—The case of the Prohibition Amendment is further evidence of the power that can be brought to bear in a cause that is quietly promoted in small groups. The

passage of the bill was not the result of a wave of popular sentiment crystallized in a sudden burst of senatorial or congressional oratory. The action at Washington was but the outcome of a movement begun seventy years before, in the little gatherings of the W. C. T. U. and similar organizations. It was fostered and developed in thousands of prayer meetings and total abstinence societies. It became the project of individual church groups. All of a sudden, it seemed, it was accepted as the principle upon which a whole sect assumed the nature of a political bloc. Similarly, if the Volstead Act should ever be modified, or the Amendment repealed, the change will be the result of discussion in small gatherings, where action is likely to follow decision.

It must be evident that the man who is effective in this everyday sort of speech making,¹ who can get up at the right time, say just what he means, and stop at the strategic moment, with the disposition of the group in favor of his contention, has a very real power. In every walk of life such power is an advantage to the individual. To the community and to the nation, under democratic forms of government, this power, in the hands of intelligent and able citizens, is a great blessing. Where the field is left to warped minds and destructively inclined elements of the population, it is a curse.

Technique Not Hard to Master.—Serviceable command of the simple technique required in such informal address can be gained with surprising ease, if you will get a clear picture of its essentials and will utilize the opportunities for practice that come your way constantly. It is a much easier technique to master, indeed, than that of conversation.

The beginner, it is true, does not think so. Beginners are prone to be scared because they see only the resemblance of organization public speaking to formal public speaking and fail to see the differences. They are abashed because they think of the great

¹ Some very practical suggestions are to be found in "Everyday Public Speaking," by Harry James Burtis, The Ronald Press Company.

orator on the big stage sailing through an elaborate address, and they suppose that the same sort of thing is required from *them*.

A Simple Activity.—Now the difficulty of formal public speaking before general audiences arises from the fact that it involves the smooth coordination of many elements. But group address in a club meeting is a very simple activity, one that is easy to pick up. It involves a different adjustment to the process of communication from that of conversation, a somewhat different attitude toward the listener, but once you assume the new attitude your habitual powers and skills begin to come into play. Much in the same way, swimming requires a way of using one's muscles for support and coordination of effort that is different from walking, but many people catch the idea of swimming—so far as keeping afloat is concerned—very easily; then it is just a matter of practice and improving your method. The essentials of the simple type of public speaking required in organization meetings are as easily acquired as the essentials of swimming. While informal group address seems at first strange in that our habitual mode of communication of thought is conversation, it is actually easier than conversation because it is more simple—you have only a few things to think of, no interruptions, no requirement of full adjustment of every remark to the peculiarities of the individual concerned.

Why is this? Well, with the address to the general audience the act of addressing the group as a whole is complicated with the many problems of building a *complete* discourse, such as: beginning at the proper point; securing the attention of a large group of comparative strangers, and holding it in the face of possible interruptions and of their own lack of interest in the subject; building the chain of reasoning, or the narrative, in proper logical order; marking properly the transitions and junction points; finally, bringing the discourse to a fitting close.

But in most of the informal speaking in organization meetings these requirements are found hardly at all.

The "Speeches" Brief and Direct.—Almost all of the "speeches" required of us in club or association life consist merely of incidental contributions to a discussion. We present a committee report or make a few remarks in connection with a report; we comment upon a situation; we approve or condemn a motion or a policy. Such utterances are relatively brief and fragmentary; the "speech" may consist of only a half-dozen sentences—merely a step in the discussion of the point under consideration by the club. Moreover, you are already bound to the group of your fellow-members by ties of various sorts—they are your own "gang"—and consequently, since your adjustments are already made, your style of communication may be almost as informal as that which you use with your own family.

No introduction is necessary, or desired; there is little or no puzzle about developing an extensive discourse; generally you treat just one or two items, then stop. There is no trouble about closing effectively, for you are only one of a series of speakers,—when you come to the end of your point you just stop, and somebody else goes on. Your task resembles somewhat, as regards its relation to a complete address, that of a member of a relay team, merely carrying the emblem for your section of the road, without worry about preliminary or finishing.

All you have to do in most informal organization "speeches" is to focus your talk on the group as a whole, not on an individual, or two or three individuals; if you can do that and convey your remarks on the few points with which you are concerned, you will do all that is required.

Those who attempt to apply conversation technique unchanged in a kind of activity which it does not fit are ineffective because unintelligible. Those others who attempt to apply what they conceive—without having any command of it—to be the technique of formal public address to an activity which it does not fit, are ineffective because their talk is inappropriate, as well as, perhaps, pretentious and clumsy.

The Conditions Favor the Speaker.—To repeat, there are advantages in this form of communication that are very great. Under the conditions there is very little in the way of critical scrutiny for you to undergo, and what you have to say has in itself a high degree of impressiveness. The meeting is in progress, the audience is already “tuned in”; their attention is already focused on the subject; they are apt to give little attention to the manner or person of the individual speaker. The form and manner of the comment that defeats a hasty action—the brief reasoning that saves a good motion from defeat—are not readily recalled five minutes after utterance. The minutes of the secretary simply record “discussion by the following members.” Yet the remarks of each speaker, carrying no baggage of introduction, connecting and transitional matter, closing exhortation and so forth, can be *all meat*; they can be wholly focused on making the point. Thus, if you really *have* something to say, the conditions of informal group address of club and association meetings are in every way propitious for effective presentation of your ideas.

Taking the Plunge.—Now it may be that you have never spoken at a meeting. Perhaps you have no desire to speak. Nevertheless, it is safe to say that some evening the occasion will arise. You will be impelled, in spite of yourself, to take a hand in the organization business which is under consideration.

It may be that you are a person of prominence in your club, active in committee work though never speaking to the whole organization. You have not made a start. When occasions offered you avoided the opportunity. Impulses that moved you were put down. You have almost reached the point of thinking that you cannot do it. In discussions in the meetings, points arise which touch your interests very definitely. You ought to say something. In conversation with two or three companions you would certainly have your say. But in this company of a hundred, or fifty, or twenty-five, even though you know them all well enough, you cannot bring yourself to speak. Can you sit

still? Will you watch things go wrong and merely growl about it?

Suppose you prescribe for yourself. Before the next situation develops suppose you think out a course of action and be prepared to follow it. Here is a sample prescription:

When the spirit moves you—

1. Jump up and say right out just what you think, in a few short, direct sentences, just as you do in conversation. Do not stop to think what to say next; say only what is "at the tip of your tongue," what demands to be said.

2. Look at the presiding officer; say it to him. Of if you prefer, face the person you are answering or supporting, or questioning, and say it to him by way of the "chair." Don't begin by looking around the group.

3. Speak out. Talk distinctly, as you would in a long-distance telephone conversation.

4. Be direct. Come to the point without delay.

5. As soon as you have uttered what was on your tongue to say, sit down. Do not repeat yourself. Do not venture to present other thoughts which occur to you after you are on your feet and which you have not carefully considered. Just sit down.

Julian Street, the well-known author, in the *American Magazine* of October, 1923, after recounting a long list of failures in communication, when his excessive shyness lost him job after job, says this:

One night during the world war I astonished myself by getting up at a meeting and unloading something that was on my mind. That happened several times and I perceived that if one's mind is charged with a subject, speaking in public is not, after all, so difficult.

Afterward—Watch the Others.—What you do after you sit down that first time is very important. At this moment you are in a state of supersensitiveness. Lose no time. Watch other

speakers; see how they do it. Observe not merely what they say, but their manner also. At such a time you will be able to note many little points as to thought and delivery which at other times you might never notice. There are specific things you will wish to observe: Do other speakers show any of the physical nervousness you experienced? Can they be heard? Is their language direct, or do they ramble and repeat? You are sure to catch some suggestion of how you may handle your own contributions. At any rate you will have taken the plunge.

As a rule it is not wise to get up again at that meeting. You may perhaps have a second inspiration and do as well or better than the first time, but the chances are you will manage it badly. Better wait for another time.

After the first attempt you will feel either secretly pleased with yourself, or inwardly ashamed and depressed. Both feelings will probably lack real justification. To the audience your remarks probably seemed quite ordinary—not much different from those of other speakers; you were just one of a series. If you can do so, look coolly at the reaction of the audience to the speakers that follow you; it will be reassuring. You can take it for granted that your “first speech” was neither very good nor very poor.

When another occasion comes, repeat your effort. Say what you think, briefly, directly, in tones loud enough to be heard by all. Stop as soon as you have said what was in your mind to say.

Benefits from the First Attempt.—After several experiences of this sort you will find that your earlier feeling of awkwardness and timidity was not really warranted; that your fears were unfounded. You have conquered inertia. Though you are not yet able to swim, at least you can float. If you are careful to get up to speak only when you have an interest in the discussion, and something to contribute to it, your progress will be steady. Very shortly you will find that you have a goodly addition to make to

the discussion and that you can talk consecutively for several minutes. At least you can do the thing.

You will find many suggestions for application to your own case, in attempting to judge what other men do. Furthermore, quite apart from any application to your own problem of presentation, you will find that your effort to participate in the "speaking" has benefited you as a listener, also. Almost at once you will find that you can form a better estimate of the efforts of other speakers. You know how it feels to make a speech; you will be more likely to discover the elements of technique in the things you have been trying to do yourself. Your power of listening will grow keener, so that you will be able to salvage valuable matter from remarks the presentation of which is badly muddled.

The Next Question—Improvement.—Now, merely to overcome your fear of the new medium is not enough. To keep afloat is only the beginning. You are at the mercy of tide and current. In losing fear without having gained some technique, you are in danger of adding another to the long list of hit or miss performers who make public meetings a sorrow. Sure command of the technique of the meeting, so that you can take a free part in discussion, thoroughly aware of your strokes, and master of them to such an extent that you can help to guide the thinking of the group, comes only with long practice. It involves long observation of others and their thoughts and manner of expression. It involves, really, systematic training of your own power of thought and command of language. Later chapters will suggest methods.

Nevertheless, you can do much for yourself almost at once, by deliberate effort of the will. That is the subject of the next chapter, immediate improvement.

CHAPTER XIV

FIRST-AID SUGGESTIONS

Cool Appraisal of the Situation.—Thus far, in your addresses to a group of listeners, your effort has been mainly to keep afloat. You have been able to plunge in and take a stroke or two. But the furious strokes and the clambering back to safety are only a beginning. It will not do to remain at the mercy of chance and impulse. Without knowing rather definitely what to do in a given case and having a reasonable confidence in your ability to do it, you cannot command a situation.

One great advantage in the first stage of your study of this technique is that you have very little critical scrutiny to undergo. The other members of the organization, the audience at a meeting, are interested primarily in the subject under discussion, hardly at all in the personal performance of individual speakers—the situation is like that of a game of volley ball—whatever idea or impulse you may present is received for what it is worth. In fact, the other members do not think of you as a beginner, but merely as taking part in the meeting in a normal way. The fact that you are giving attention to the development of your technique is known only to you.

Why not begin by making it a systematic practice to examine coolly your own thoughts on whatever matter is under discussion—to see what contribution you have to make and how your ideas can best be arranged for presentation? Then observe with the same coolness the contributions which others make to the meetings, and learn to note little points that seem to affect success in addressing a group.

Judicious and Timely Speech—Not Necessarily Frequent.

—It will be clear from such observation that frequent utterance is not necessarily the way of great influence in the meeting. For it is the nature of the remark, its timeliness, the appropriateness of the line of thought it represents, its directive power, that count in the discussion. It is this sense of the fitness of things in general and a comprehensive grasp of the affairs of the club in particular, that underlie ability in deliberation. To know just what to say, and just when to present it to the minds of others, for the purposes involved, is the main objective of your study.

The first requisite, obviously, is that of clear knowledge of the purposes of the association and familiarity with its current affairs. If this condition is not met, any desire a member may have to take part in the discussion will result in useless talk and delay. If his remarks reveal ignorance of matters commonly known, others will naturally rise to supply this knowledge. The result will be that the progress of the whole body is hindered, not helped; the individual is disconcerted and attention flags. The member who takes the trouble to think about the affairs of the club, who knows and considers its purposes, who thereby acquires a basis for judgment of this proposal or that, may talk little yet contribute much.

Nor is frequent utterance the way of improvement for the individual. "Speak at every meeting" is very bad counsel. For speech cannot be dissociated from that which is spoken. It is not reasonable to suppose that the individual will have something worth saying at every session or upon all subjects. To speak without incentive is to stultify your own effort. Idle talk results, which the speaker himself cannot respect. Without respect for his message he cannot hope to win the respect of others. And success as a speaker rests at bottom on this one thing, that the audience recognize your *right* to talk.

The Courtesies of the Floor.—The act of participating in a meeting is simple enough. The individual rises at the nod of

recognition from the chairman; he takes the floor; he speaks his mind; he sits down. No long experience in meetings is required to make one aware of how widely men differ in their attempts to perform this simple act.

Now this series of actions is not strange in nature. It is essentially what happens when you take part in an ordinary conversation. But the courtesies involved are more obvious in the meeting than they are in conversation. The man who pushes his way into the polite conversation of friends will be apt to give scant consideration to the rights of others in meetings. He will attempt to seize the floor whenever he chooses to speak. Fortunately for his hearers, he will be properly restrained through the application by the chairman of the protective forms built up to handle just such cases. The unpleasant impression, moreover, which he makes by reason of his bad manners is likely to rob his ideas of the attention they might otherwise merit. On the other hand, quiet dignity in the observance of the conventions that govern the privilege of the floor in the discussion, helps to gain a hearing for the thought one wishes to present.

Posture and Bearing.—When you “have the floor” all eyes are turned upon you. That is what you want. The eye fixed on you is the token of a mind made ready to receive your thought. Do not distract your listeners. Try to stand erect, not stiffly but with easy poise. Devote yourself wholly to the expression of your thought. If, inadvertently, you provide minor entertainment for the listeners’ eyes, through slouching and fidgeting, their minds may also wander. Have you not observed in the case of other speakers the distressing effects of totally unnecessary little tricks of muscle that have become habitual? This matter is discussed in some detail in Chapter XXXV. What is there said applies with particular point in an address to a group.

If you are troubled with lack of easy muscular control, and consciousness of the fault is not sufficient in itself to eliminate

the bad habit, you probably belong to the great number of sedentary workers who need physical exercise. The outdoor man is rarely bothered by any such lack of muscular control when he has to make a speech. Whatever his embarrassment in making the mental adjustment for the inevitable first plunge, he is rarely hindered afterward by lack of poise.

The suggestion that presents itself in this event is obvious. Keep yourself in good trim physically. If you have no adequate facilities for suitable exercise, make shift to find them. The vigorous walk every day—at any time—will do wonders. Get up in time to walk the last mile to the office each morning. Walk the little distances you now ride during the day. Add to your daily routine a brisk walk just before bed time. In this activity as in all others you will find your task easier if you keep your body “in tune.”

Your Voice.—The physical well-being that begets poise and ease of bearing will show also in your voice. The truth is, as explained in detail in Chapter XXXIV, practically everyone has the apparatus for a satisfactory voice. “I have a poor voice” is a common confession of a spirit of resignation that deserves no credit. The fact in almost every case is better represented by “I do not know how to use my voice”—or “I do not take the trouble to use my voice properly.” The general physical condition is reflected in the state of the respiratory system and consequently in the voice. Keeping fit is an aid toward improvement of the voice.

It will be a matter of interest to you to take note of the voices of your fellow-members who address the club or association. Some will annoy your ear as the result of little defects easily remedied by attention to the causes. You will learn to detect the cases in which poor breath control or poor resonance results in unpleasant tone. The habit of such observation will aid you in eliminating similar faults from your own speech.

You will discover that some men have two voices, one pleas-

ant and easy in conversation, the other harsh and unnatural, exhibited in meeting. One of the supreme court judges of a southern state, some years ago, had a voice in ordinary conversation that matched the massive dignity of his physique. It had that peculiar depth and richness of quality which makes people turn and listen. But when he spoke in public the splendid big voice became a shrill scream. He had never learned to manage it properly before a group.

Easy, Moderate Tones.—The clear, full, easy tones of a well-pitched voice, made habitual by daily care in ordinary talk, will prove adequate for every purpose of a club or association meeting. You need only remember not to force the tone, not to strain or shout even when deeply in earnest. And in particular take care not to let yourself jump to a high pitch when you begin to speak, like that southern judge. High tones are apt to seem to the speaker louder and more dominating than those that are pitched lower, but that is an illusion. Tones that are easy but steady and resonant have better carrying power—that is, they sound louder to the listeners—and give no suggestion of strain or excitement. Shouting tones and high pitch get on the nerves of the listeners whether or not they realize what it is that offends them.

The following course of action will be helpful. Join freely in the discussions that precede the formal opening of a meeting. The use of the voice in this preliminary interchange of opinion serves the very practical purpose of “warming up” the vocal apparatus. When you do speak, stand erect, and apply the methods of breathing explained in Chapter XXXIV. If you give some attention to the size of the audience and of the assembly room you will find little difficulty, as a rule, in regulating properly the loudness of the tones. Even though you forget about such matters in the rapid give and take of ordinary conversation, or in the heat of committee discussion, there is no excuse for forgetting when you rise to address a meeting. In the first efforts

to improve the technique of your informal public speaking, care for proper use of the voice is something that particularly repays attention.

Distinct Enunciation.—In this connection, a little extra care in articulation will not be amiss. The effect on the ear of the listener is always pleasing. There is a certain attraction about the speech of one who cuts his syllables sharply, who “carves every word before he lets it fall.” We do not, of course, admire the pedantic utterance which calls attention to the carving process rather than to the thought that requires the use of the word. Exaggerated articulation is just as incorrect as the other extreme. Syllables should be struck off accurately, completely, and yet lightly. The rhythm of speech must never be sacrificed. It will be always a pleasure to listen to those who, as Hamlet enjoins the Players, “speak the speech . . . trippingly on the tongue,” or who practice in their daily utterance what Bernard Shaw calls “a certain athleticism in speech.”¹

Careful Pronunciation.—Similarly, care for pronunciation counts a great deal in this informal public speaking. When addressing a group you are on exhibition much more than in conversation. You wish to give an impression of accuracy and self-command. Even those who pretend to be scornful of the niceties of speech regard correct pronunciation as one of the marks of superior judgment and education. Trivial as it may seem, the mispronunciation of a word may seriously limit the effectiveness of a brief speech. Give ear to others. When they pronounce words in ways that are different from your own custom, go to the dictionary.

The Thought—Orderly Presentation of a Judgment.—Finally, as to the substance of your talk. You will find it profitable to determine clearly in your own mind just what is the thought, the point, you wish to make, and then formulate quickly

¹ Chapter XXXIII, “Enunciation and Pronunciation,” discusses in detail the points touched upon in these pages.

but definitely, one by one, the few broad reasons or considerations which will lead that particular audience to accept your view. Very often when a man rises to speak in a club meeting, he has not thus formulated in his own mind his judgment and his argument and he presents a painful spectacle as he proceeds to think the question through, out loud.

In discussing a subject with a close friend we are apt to reveal the whole process of the mind; we think aloud along with him. We let him see exactly what is in our memory—what prejudices we consult; how we wander on the road to conviction. But in our contributions to the discussion of the affairs of the club, we cannot follow the same course. Time does not permit, for one thing. More than that, a group does not want it. The individual is presumed to have something definite in mind, to be presenting a judgment, a conclusion, in which he wishes the others to concur. In some instances the conclusion may be the crystallization of the thought of the group and acceptance will be ready and immediate. In such event a brief statement suffices. Whenever this is not the case, however, we must proceed to lay before the audience such considerations as will enable them to reach for themselves the conclusion we have offered. There is need of intense, keen effort of mind in formulating one's judgments, in choosing just the words that will express them accurately for those who hear us, and in arranging the terms we use in a way that will suggest no application not intended. The attempt to do this on the spur of the moment, in the rush of the meeting, puts a man on his mettle.

The Prime Essential—Adjustment of the Ideas.—In addressing a group, as in conversation, the most important matter is the effort constantly to adjust the convictions you have to present to the capacities and attitudes of the audience in front of you. At the first attempt, as a device for overcoming the nervousness of beginning, the suggestion was made of just standing up and hurling in your message. But as soon as the first feeling

of nervousness is gone, the old problem of adaptation presents itself. Just as in the contacts of business and professional life and in the give and take of committee work, you have to be tactful in introducing and developing ideas.

In addressing a group, consideration for adjustment will lead you first of all to bear in mind that you are talking not to any individual but to the composite which the group represents. You will be careful, therefore, to refrain from the digressions, asides, and personalities which enter into any conversation with an individual. To reach *all* of your listeners, to carry them all along with you, it is necessary to express your thought in simple terms and to keep to a plain connected line of development. However informal the talk, the idea should be expressed in thought units that are definite and plain. Similarly, the order should be so clear that the listener can follow it without effort. It can be done, if you put your mind on the listeners. Further, you need to make sure that you cover a point fully enough for the slow ones, without tiring the swift ones with detail and dull repetition.

In the second place, a more dynamic manner of speaking is required than is desirable in conversation. While avoiding all suggestion of egotism or officiousness, you are expected to speak with firmness. The fact that you are on your feet at all implies that you feel a "call to preach" on that particular subject.

You do not want to give an impression of noise, vehemence, or excitement, but unless you are manifestly in earnest you are not likely to retain the attention of the entire audience. Some of them—whether the slow ones or the quick ones, it does not matter—will stop listening and your audience will disintegrate. Alertness of manner, crispness of articulation, clear tones, you need them all. And in your language and thought-sequence not only accuracy but also snap and vigor. You will use your best energy at every moment to make each thing that you say interesting.

Focusing Your Powers.—Talking connectedly to a purpose for the benefit of several minds of different types is not simply

a matter of presenting a clear idea in suitable form. Many considerations affect the speaker as he advances the idea. There is the proper regard for the outcome; there are the several minds and personalities of the members, each with an attitude or bias in the case. To learn to talk one's best when hedged about with these many considerations calls for some effort, but the resulting increase of personal power, after the technique becomes familiar, is well worth all it costs. And every meeting of the organization to which you belong offers opportunities for study of the technique.

You can achieve a very considerable improvement almost at once in the technique of this informal public speaking, if you will in some such ways as here suggested take stock of the problems such communication presents, and of how you can best utilize your present powers.

CHAPTER XV

SELF-TRAINING—THOUGHT

The Foundation of Good Talk—Sound Thinking.—When you approach the task of gradual improvement in the various elements of group presentation of thought which are not subject to easy and quick change, the matter first to consider is that of improvement in the technique of the thought itself. Without a foundation of sound thinking, no talk is worth while. Even chat of a casual nature, and nonsense too, for that matter, are but lighter phases of the operation of a well-ordered mind. To speak well, even on the limited occasions that present themselves in club and association meetings, calls for strengthening of the power to pick up accurately and quickly an idea presented by someone else—however inadequately it may have been formulated—and to formulate your own ideas in statements which are logically sound throughout.

A most helpful sort of training to this end can be obtained in connection with the club meetings themselves, through systematic observation of how the various participants succeed in handling the situations developed in the life of the organization. In the discussions all members have essentially the same task; to create and present ideas for the good of the group. How each one performs this task depends upon the habits of mind that serve him well or ill in these and other contacts or obligations. Systematic improvement in meeting these obligations involves more than anything else the practice of retracing mentally, after the meeting, the steps of a discussion, to check up and improve the way in which you and your fellow-members have thought through each situation of the group.

Beyond the pleasantries of social contact, your estimate of a fellow-member is likely to be based largely upon his contributions to the discussions and transactions of club affairs. From these you are apt to judge of his mental power, his constructive thinking ability. Through systematizing such observations of the communication technique of your fellow-members, as they participate in the group activity, it is possible for you to work out a sort of standard measurement which may be applied to the performance of others, and which may become also the basis of a sustained effort to improve your own power of thought.

Building Reliable Thought Habits.—The contacts of business or professional life give constant evidence of the effects of habit in individuals. Nevertheless, while we are all creatures of habit, we are apt to disregard the many opportunities provided by chance and by daily routine for utilizing the aid of habit in our personal improvement. We are wont to recognize as habits the way we stand, sit, walk, eat, talk. We realize that our practice in these matters is the result of heredity, of environment, of imitation; that while modification of these habits may be difficult it is entirely within our power to substitute good ways for bad, better for mediocre, if we are willing to expend the necessary time and energy in the effort.

We sometimes fail to recognize that habit rules also in determining the way in which we think. Yet unquestionably we can, by act of will, develop the habit of giving attention to our own thought processes, of consciously checking the steps by which we reach this decision or that, of reviewing our steps before we act, of reflecting upon our action and all that went before. We can do much the same for the thoughts of others. When we read, if we make it a practice to scan closely the author's process of thought, to accept what he writes only if it satisfies such critical judgment as we are able to bring to bear on it, we can make our reading doubly valuable, both in terms of what we learn, and in terms of the increased facility for learning that we develop.

Similarly, we can learn much through systematic observation of the thought-habits of the speakers at a meeting.

Two prerequisites for any systematic effort for improvement of the power of thought are, care for health and the development of the power of mental detachment.

Prerequisites—Good Health.—Other things being equal, a distinct advantage in human affairs rests with the man who is physically fit. He is better at work, better at play, likely to be more reliable in his thinking. The mind, as noted in the striking little essay by Professor William James on "The Energies of Men," which may be found in his volume entitled "Collected Essays," is not in itself susceptible to fatigue. Most of us employ but a fraction of the mind's capacity. Many persons, however, fail to keep the body in a state of vigor such that nerve and muscle will support the tension necessary to great and sustained mental effort. A foundation for reliable and effective habits of thinking is intelligent and steady care of physical health.

Power of Detachment—Mental Review.—On the other hand, many persons who are in vigorous health have not learned to withdraw the mind from the turmoil of petty concerns. This detachment of the mind, with the "power of review" to which it leads, is at once an achievement in itself and a source of further accomplishment. Philosophers recommend it; wise men resort to it. Woodrow Wilson considered this ability one of the fundamental qualities of Lincoln's greatness. It lies within the power of each one of us to escape from the daily round, to stand apart from other persons and take counsel with himself. It is a soothing practice at least and you will find that it has many practical benefits.

Nor is it hard to cultivate the habit of mental retirement in which you think out the problems that come your way. Place and time for it must suit the individual. It may be the first half-hour of the day at the office, or the half-hour before luncheon.

It may be managed while walking to work in the morning, or while walking home in the evening. Some give to it the hour before retiring at night. It is of your routine, yet it offers escape from routine. It gives you the chance to look at your world. Easily acquired, this habit of detachment is exceedingly useful—most useful, perhaps, to those who know something of the processes of the mind.

Suppose you begin your effort at improvement of the quality of your thinking in connection with club or association activities, by cultivating the practice of deliberate review of each meeting. Take an hour after the next session and run over the business as transacted. Go over the discussions and reconsider the decisions made by the group. What does calm after-thought reveal? To which of the conclusions reached can you yield complete agreement? Upon which do you look with doubt? Can you give reasons for your doubting? For which of the problems that await the action of the group mind at the next meeting can you find a reasonable solution? Test your solution in one or two periods of detachment before the next meeting. A solution thus tested you should be able to present effectively and with little difficulty.

The First Step—Defining the Problem.—The point of beginning for sound thought lies in determining the exact nature of the perplexity or problem under consideration. This would seem to be a very obvious condition, almost too evident to deserve mention, and yet experience shows that it is often neglected. Every one of us has heard extended remarks in meetings on subjects wholly unrelated to the task in hand, but injected into the discussion as the result of failure on the part of a member to grasp the true nature of the matter before the group, and failure of the chairman to note the fault. The fundamental principle involved in this situation has been discussed already in earlier chapters. It is the first step in committee discussion, as noted in

Chapter XI. We shall find later that it is of primary concern in a public address having to do with the solution of a problem.

The army manuals dealing with minor tactics impress upon the student the necessity for "estimating the situation," for considering the mission imposed in every stage of each operation. The patrol leader with his handful of men is cautioned again and again to ask himself two questions—What is the situation? What is my mission? The pattern of thought for the army commander is not different—What is the situation? What is the condition of the enemy, his position, his strength, his dispositions, his intent? What of our own troops? What is our present purpose?

At the close of the first chapter of his "Art of War"¹ Marshal Foch says to the young officers whom he is addressing:

You will be asked later on to be the brain of an army. I tell you today: *Learn to think*. In the presence of each question, considered freely and in itself, you must first ask yourselves: *What is the problem?* There is the beginning of the state of mind we are looking for; there is the direction wanted, a purely *objective* one.

And he cites a remark from Napoleon:

It is not some familiar spirit which suddenly and secretly discloses to me what I have to say or do, in a case unexpected by others; it is reflection, meditation.

Application to Club Discussions.—These considerations should receive attention also when you begin to think out the problems of your club or association. If you take pains to define a matter under consideration accurately and fully in your own thinking, it is not likely that you will fail to present it to others in such a way as to enable them to gain a satisfactory view, a sound initial viewpoint. To achieve this end, for yourself, involves long and sometimes painful effort. It is a constant temptation to let yourself go without pausing for a cool survey of the case. The deeper your interest in a matter, the stronger this temptation.

¹ Ferdinand Foch, *The Art of War*, Henry Holt & Co.

You are sure that you *do* know, at least that you know what you want, that you know your own feeling. But steady self-discipline as to this one point, making certain that you state every problem plainly and coolly to yourself before entering further into its consideration, will in time develop not only caution but fairness and courage.

And while disciplining yourself, you will not fail to try the speeches of your associates by the same requirements. When reviewing the transactions of the meeting, in the period of quiet thought which you regularly set aside for the purpose, this first and essential point will be considered: how clearly, so far as you can determine, has each of those who participated in the discussion stated the problem for himself.

The Second Step—Adequate Information.—Recognition and definition depend on full and accurate information. The answer to the question: What is the problem? involves keen analysis of the terms or elements of the matter and full information on each point. If there be neglect in this step all that follows is useless. It is advisable to take sufficient time to make a complete analysis in explicit terms. Some persons find it helpful to set down the result in writing. Others find that careful analysis leaves a mental impression or series of impressions that will clarify thought and make easier the way of expression, even though nothing is written down.

All the processes of thought are employed in efforts to reach decisions. While some decisions are so immediate that they seem automatic, yet in reality they are not without mental action, only the action has become habitual. Good habits make life easier. Bad habits are simply evil decisions often repeated. It is helpful to give careful attention to the means by which we reach decisions.

Consider the working scheme of the mind. We are here concerned with the process itself and for the moment may ignore conditions and limitations. Decisions or judgments, as we may call them, are not primary operations of the mind. The first and hum-

blest step in this scheme is awareness, consciousness of the existence of something outside of self.

Perception.—We are certainly aware of the presence of a mass of something before we classify it as “wood.” And we have this distinct concept of its nature before we render the judgment “this piece of wood is oak.” We may decide that “this piece of wood is quartered oak.” The number of classifications we are able to make, and the series of truths we manage to grasp depend of course on our knowledge or experience. Thus the range of experience, and the power of memory, which makes particular parts of it available for present use, differ in individuals and condition judgment. But the method, in general, is the same for all.

The moment you glimpse the word “wood,” ideas begin to rise upon your consciousness: hard, soft, maple, pine, oak, spruce, walnut, chestnut, beech, balsam, teak, mahogany . . . beams, flooring, panels, trim. . . . From these, marshalled by memory, the mind makes its selection. The list corresponds, of course, in character and extent, to the kind and compass of the observation employed in the stocking of the mind, and to the kind of perception that has resulted at each stage from reflection on those observations. It is natural that beyond a certain level men should differ widely in their reactions to such a stimulus. The chemist, confronted with the term “wood,” runs through a different category or series of classifications from that which occurs to the carpenter, the interior decorator, the landscape gardener, the engineer, the paper manufacturer. Each has come by his knowledge in a different way and each has added to the sum of his observations in a different degree.

Classification.—Similarly, an obstruction in front of you, as you gaze from your library across green fields to the mountains beyond, is at first merely a vague mass. Favored with attention, the vague mass becomes a stone wall, a definite idea. The notion “low” occurs to you and, in a jiffy, you have connected the two

ideas, stone wall and low. "The stone wall is low." This is the third step in the operation, the act of the mind—judgment.

These simple examples may serve to illustrate the process of classification which goes on in the mind whenever we attempt to name or define an object or idea. Of course minds are not equal, not uniform. Thus to one mind, the "vague mass" becomes a stone wall—to another, a "dry wall"—to a third, a "dry wall of banded gneiss"—to a fourth, a "dry wall of banded gneiss, lately disturbed by hunters with dogs." Here we have several samples of the process of judgment. Immediate judgments are these, struck off by the individuals in each case upon recognition of the object. In thought, these judgments are turned at once into qualifying words and phrases applied to the object we are naming or classifying. Thus one eye beholds what one mind calls a brick building; another, a building of common face brick; a third, a building of common face brick in the Byzantine style.

It is evident that the definiteness and completeness of a judgment is proportionate to the fullness and accuracy of the information we have of the matter. To a large degree it is proportionate to the information we have ready to hand. Obviously, our power of forming quickly an effective judgment on a matter coming up for group discussion is greatly bettered if we take the precaution to look up the subject beforehand, to round out and verify our information.

Systematic Gathering of Information.—It is the custom today to scorn "mere knowledge" with too sweeping a gesture. Certainly the storing of miscellaneous, unrelated facts is poor use for the mind. The unfortunate souls who undertake to master the contents of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, working methodically through the alphabetically arranged volumes, rarely are able to make real use of their ill-grouped fragments of knowledge. We may remember, though, that not all knowledge is thus unrelated. We are called upon for numerous judgments in connection with our daily obligations. To render these judgments immediately

calls for a considerable body of knowledge that must be ours in advance. In industry, in commerce, in the professions, we could never catch up if every judgment called for required a new bit of research.

The same principle applies in the activities of club and association. We have seen the advantage to be derived from intelligent examination of Cushing's "Manual," or Robert's "Rules of Order," to gain a working understanding of the principles of parliamentary usage. So with the topics which come before the association for decision, at least such as come up frequently. If you are to do your part and exercise the influence to which you are entitled, it is well worth the time required to supply yourself with a fair basis of information. Otherwise, you have to exercise much greater effort, at the time of the discussion, merely in orienting yourself with reference to the question at issue—discovering "what it is all about." Other things being equal, the man whose knowledge is wider, more complete, more exact, can arrive at more trustworthy decisions than other men, and generally more quickly.

Preparation for Club Discussion.—All this is accepted as a matter of course in its application to daily work, as witness the research activities of any large industrial enterprise today. In a recent work on statistics by the chief accountant of the New York Telephone Company, seven chapters are given to listing the classes of facts which need to be definitely known before trustworthy judgments can be formed upon various operating problems.² Not so clearly is it recognized in relation to the other activities of life; for example, in relation to the affairs of club or association. Surely the mind that operates with accuracy for one purpose ought to be reliable in other directions. Yet just as successful and reputable physicians and qualified professors are found to be the largest purchasers of dubious "investment" stocks, just as capable business men are found in numbers on the subscription

² B. F. Young, *Statistics as Used in Business*, The Ronald Press Company.

lists of ridiculous movements in philosophy, education and religion, so men and women who in their personal affairs are accurate and prudent will tolerate and even support a foolish practice by an association in which they are active, with no realization, apparently, of their own incongruous figure.

As another important part of your self-discipline, therefore, it is well to set aside some time for systematic preparation on the subjects which come before the association in which you take an active part. In your regular review of the meeting, it will be well to allow time for cool appraisal of the range and orderliness of such stocking-up with information on the part of your fellow members, so far as you can determine this from their remarks in discussion.

You are doing all this, remember, not so much for its value in dispatching the immediate business of the group as for training your own powers of quick and reliable thinking. The fact that the concerns of the association are generally of limited scope and seriousness makes them the better for this purpose of self-training. It is not a life and death matter. It is rather like the exercises one carries through for an instructor in the class study of a subject. You may not be able to go thoroughly into every topic which comes up, but establishing the orderly habit of such preparation and review will steadily strengthen your own powers of speech when needed.

The Third Step—Scrutinizing the Facts.—The third step in thought, the scrutiny and testing of the facts presented, is one that is most neglected. Failure to examine the nature of the evidence before proceeding to the normal process of reasoning is more generally responsible for errors than is poor reasoning. Indeed, the cases in which men reason poorly are not half so many as the cases in which, by accepting for fact what is only assumption, by assuming as true that which is false, they waste all of the mental effort that follows a false start. What you have to do for yourself is to establish a critical attitude toward information, a habit of

rigid scrutiny, so that you have a definite opinion as to the reliability of statements whether in speech or in writing, before you make them the basis of your own reasoning in the problem at hand. Good reasoning from unsound or inappropriate premises is of no avail.

Fact versus Inference.—In testing thought we need first and always to discriminate between fact and inference. The process of reasoning consists in drawing inferences from acceptable facts and thereby forming conclusions and estimating probabilities. The inferences of a qualified authority have uses in our reasoning, but not the same uses as obvious and accepted facts.

Cases of confusion of fact and inference are incessant. The difficulties and perplexities of business and professional life arise in large degree from this. The newspapers are full of instances in connection with the sensational trials which rouse such general attention. The wide attention to such trials on the part of persons of all sorts is not altogether due to morbid curiosity; it is in a considerable degree owing to the interest all active-minded persons have in the process of reasoning. We want to know what are the facts in the case; what are the influences which those concerned with the matter draw from these facts. The problem catches our interest as does a cross-word puzzle.

Similarly, confusion of fact and inference forms the basis of many of the works of literature that have commanded public attention, plays, novels, and stories. Thus in one of his great tragedies, Shakespeare has Lady Macbeth speak in scorn of her husband's weakness as she goes about the task of arranging a bit of circumstantial evidence.

LADY MACBETH. Who was it that thus cried? Why, worthy thane,
You do unbend your noble strength, to think
So brainsickly of things. Go, get some water,
And wash this filthy witness from your hand.
Why did you bring these daggers from the place?
They must lie there: go, carry them, and smear
The sleepy grooms with blood.

MACBETH. I'll go no more :

I am afraid to think what I have done ;
Look on't again I dare not.

LADY MACBETH. Infirm of purpose !

Give me the daggers. The sleeping and the dead
Are but as pictures ; 'tis the eye of childhood
That fears a painted devil. If he do bleed
I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal,
For it must seem their guilt.

And again in "Othello," as indicated by the lines spoken by Iago after he has secured the handkerchief from his wife Emilia :

IAGO. Be not acknown on 't : I have use for it.

Go, leave me. (Exit Emilia)

I will in Cassio's lodging lose this napkin,
And let him find it : trifles, light as air
Are to the jealous confirmations strong
As proofs of holy writ. This may do something ;
The Moor already changes with my poison :

Long ago, as is told in "Genesis," Joseph's brethren played on inference.

Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him ; for he is our brother and our flesh : and his brethren were content ; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver : and they brought Joseph into Egypt.

And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood ; and they rent the coat of many colors, and they brought it to their father ; and said, This have we found : know now whether it be thy son's coat or no. And he knew it, and said, It is my son's coat ; an evil beast hath devoured him ; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces. And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days. . . .

The Habit of Pausing to Consider.—The practice of scrutinizing all that you hear and all that you read, of testing the information you acquire from others, will aid you in distinguishing clearly between the process of verification—which many omit

altogether, and the process of inference—which is more or less easily managed. In almost every perplexity or problem affecting a group we are forced at first to deal with the “much that is not so.”

The great hindrance to such careful scrutiny is the pressure of work, the lack of time. For most of the matters we must decide we have to render decisions almost instantly. Moreover, we approach our problem with minds preoccupied with other matters. We need, therefore, above all things to develop the habit of automatically pausing to look over the case, of examining closely—though swiftly—the control points, a habit which will function without our having to make a conscious effort of will in the matter. The conditions of club and association life, in which the problems are limited in scope and seriousness, but in which a number of individuals of different types are united in comparable circumstances for the study of each problem, provide a most convenient laboratory. Utilizing this laboratory is a highly effective way of developing the habit of discriminating between fact and opinion.

Testing the Facts Themselves.—Next is the matter of testing the facts themselves: Are they pertinent? Are they sufficient? Are they stated fully and fairly?

At every turn in life we are provided with opportunities to study evidence. In dealing with most of our fellow men we are constantly forced to discount what they say. While there are few whose utterances are direct lies, many are by habit inaccurate in their thought, and because of their tendency to magnify certain facts and to omit others their statements and inferences lack reliability. Frequently prejudice is involved, and then one needs to be doubly careful to scrutinize the statements in the case, to discover just what is fact and what is bias, or to what degree the facts have been manipulated. Nor is it safe to be too trustful in accepting what appears in print. The popular trust in the unconfirmed “evidence” that is found in newspaper, periodical or book is not warranted. The *Literary Digest*, with its array of fact and

opinion, gathered throughout the country, bearing on both sides of every important public question, has done much to educate the average citizen in the practice of weighing evidence.

Statistics require the closest scrutiny. The generally sceptical reaction of the plain man to statistics employed as proof is warranted not so much by any intent to deceive, as the colloquial response, "Oh, you can make figures prove anything" might suggest, but rather by the mistakes of those who use the statistics inaccurately. Thus both the supporters of prohibition and its opponents seek to prove their case by presenting figures on drunkenness. Before the figures can be accepted as evidence, however, we need to know the situations in the areas from which the reports are drawn. We must have the facts concerning police activity in arresting and reporting cases of drunkenness. We must know the practice of the local courts in ruling on the charges or convictions.

Testing the Inferences.—Finally, the inferences themselves are to be tested. Are they drawn logically, that is, according to the procedure of reasoning generally accepted as trustworthy? Has the speaker or writer such knowledge of the matter, or such reputation for accuracy and fairness as renders his opinions or inferences especially trustworthy?

At this point you will find it interesting and profitable to examine some of the books on Evidence and Argumentation. The processes of reasoning were long ago definitely charted and explained. In recent years a number of books have appeared which state the principles in simple terms. There is none better for the purpose than the clear-cut treatise on "Argumentation" by Professors Baker and Huntington.³

Other books which you will find helpful are: Swift's "Psychology and the Day's Work,"⁴ Dewey's "How We Think,"⁵

³ George P. Baker and Henry C. Huntington, *Principles of Argumentation*, Ginn and Co.

⁴ Edgar J. Swift, *Psychology and the Day's Work*, Charles Scribner's Sons.

⁵ John Dewey, *How We Think*, D. C. Heath & Co.

Poffenberger's "Psychology of Advertising,"⁶ Overstreet's "Influencing Human Behavior,"⁷ and a wide-ranging, stimulating volume by Graham Wallas, "The Art of Thought."⁸

Utilizing the Club Discussion.—Every discussion that occurs in the club meeting presents the issue of accepting or rejecting information supplied by others. You have to apply the usual tests for credibility:

Has the speaker the means of gaining correct information?

Has he any possible interest or ulterior motive in concealing the truth?

Do the facts supplied by other reputable persons tend to confirm what the speaker has said?

You can begin at once to watch the judgments uttered in conversations, in meetings, in committees. This watchfulness will be its own reward, for you will be less easily satisfied with the conclusions offered. You will question the inferences drawn by others. You will be more careful in your own attempts to reach conclusions and will seek to test your findings before you permit yourself to tell them to others. This effort for greater accuracy is likely to contribute to gradual improvement in your habitual thought processes in every relation of life, as regards both your estimate of the work of others and the presentation of your own views.

Presentation—Arrangement of Ideas.—Assuming that you have definite knowledge of the subject under discussion and that you desire now to present your view to the group, you seek to accomplish your purpose by making a series of statements which you proceed to justify as you go along. The operation that you carry out in the process of this justification will be determined by the following considerations:

The nature of the Subject

The purpose of the Speaker

⁶ Albert T. Poffenberger, *The Psychology of Advertising*, A. W. Shaw Co.

⁷ Harry A. Overstreet, *Influencing Human Behavior*, W. W. Norton Co.

⁸ Graham Wallas, *The Art of Thought*, Harcourt, Brace and Co.

The nature of the Audience
Their purpose in being present
The nature of the Occasion

These are the main factors that condition the thinking of a speaker. You speak in terms of a conclusion you wish your hearers to accept. The means you employ to affect them, the nature and amount of detail, the arrangement of items, will of course vary with every case, according to circumstances.

While no hard-and-fast formula can be laid down, your general effort will be directed to the accomplishment of the following ends :

To prepare the minds of your hearers for the significant elements of the thoughts you wish to present.

To lodge in the minds of the audience the details, the facts, the illustrations, the comparisons, that will justify your conclusions,—in an order or arrangement that will accomplish this end with the greatest economy.

To impress the conclusion upon the minds of your hearers—whether it be uttered in so many words or not.

Or, in the words of the colored preacher: "Tell 'em what you're going to tell 'em. Tell 'em. Tell 'em what you have told 'em."

Outlining the Speeches of Other Members.—Here also, in improving your power of presentation, the performances of other members on the floor of the association meeting will prove of constant value. You will find it very helpful to follow the remarks of the speakers, one by one, jotting down the successive points that each one makes, the steps in his progress through his presentation. It is not necessary to use the speaker's words; rather, boil down each point to a short, bare sentence or phrase—a sentence is better because more definite. It is well to note also, as you go, the nature of the filling or supporting matter which he gives with each point. This may be a series of repetitions of the statement. It may be a series of details. It may be an illustration, a comparison, or a

story. Particularly helpful is it to note the proportions of the speaker's talk—how much time he gives to point *one*, point *two*, and so on. The habit of making such brief but definite written analyses of the remarks of speakers at the meetings you attend, and then looking them over in your later period of review, will bring to a focus the whole process of your study of thinking. This is one point of difference between the ordinary jurymen and the judge.

Analyzing Other Material.—You will find it profitable also to supplement this swift analysis of association speeches with similar studies of other addresses you may hear in public gatherings, or over the radio, and of passages that you read. Newspaper editorials are particularly good for this purpose, because, like club and association speeches, they are short and they generally confine themselves to a single aspect of the topic they discuss. You will find that the practice of such analysis, familiarizing yourself with the patterns of thought commonly followed in writing and speech, greatly strengthens your power of swift and accurate comprehension of what you read as well as of what you hear.

Insensibly, you will feel the effects of such analysis in your own talk. You will build up a little collection or store of typical methods of development, regarding each of which you will know the effect produced on the audience. You will discover that certain formulas are more frequently used, and with better results, than others. Like the practiced chess-player who knows all the possible "openings" up to the eighth move or so, you will be able when you rise to speak to select with little difficulty a formula of developing your case that is appropriate both to the material you have and to the audience.

Some Formulas Often Followed.—The significant statement indicates the direction that the thought will take. In a paragraph of prose this statement may appear anywhere. In speech, where the arrangement is less elaborate, the topic statement gen-

erally comes first. The pattern thus outlined is then developed by all that follows, that is to say: The statement is interpreted; false interpretations are set aside; the statement is expanded; the true interpretation is affirmed and reaffirmed; the topic is finished and the next significant statement is introduced.

This arrangement is indicated in the following passage from what has been called one of the wittiest and wisest of American books, Dr. Holmes' "Autocrat of the Breakfast Table":⁹

What are the great faults of conversation? (1) Want of ideas, want of words, want of manners, are the principal ones, I suppose you think. I don't doubt it, (2) but I will tell you what I have found spoil more good talks than anything else;—long arguments on special points between people who differ on the fundamental principles upon which these points depend. (3) No men can have satisfactory relations with each other until they have agreed on certain ultimata of belief not to be disturbed in ordinary conversation, and unless they have sense enough to trace the secondary questions depending upon these ultimate beliefs to their source. (4) *In short, just as a written constitution is essential to the best social order, so a code of finalities is a necessary condition to profitable talk between two persons. Talking is like playing on the harp; there is as much in laying the hand upon the strings to stop their vibrations as in twanging them to bring out their music.*

In this passage the thought structure may be represented as follows:

1. Introductory statement
2. Significant statement (judgment)
3. Interpretation by paraphrase
4. Interpretation by comparison

The man who has clear knowledge of his subject generally uses correct terms and is careful to define them. The judgments he offers for the consideration of others he will be ready to justify. An example may be found in the great speech by Edmund Burke in the British House of Commons in 1775, on "Conciliation with the Colonies":

⁹ Oliver Wendell Holmes, *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*, Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

The proposition is peace. Not peace through the medium of war; not peace to be hunted through the labyrinth of intricate and endless negotiations; not peace to arise out of universal discord, fomented from principle in all parts of the empire; not peace to depend on the juridical determination of perplexing questions, or the precise marking the shadowy boundaries of a complex government. It is simple peace, sought in its natural course, and in its ordinary haunts—it is peace sought in the spirit of peace, and laid in principles purely pacific. I propose, by removing the ground of difference, and by restoring the former unsuspecting confidence of the colonies in the Mother Country, to give permanent satisfaction to your people, and (far from a scheme of ruling by discord) to reconcile them to each other in the same act, and by the bond of the very same interest, which reconciles them to British government.

The thought-structure here may be represented as follows:

Statement—the proposition is peace

Definition—by negation
by affirmation

Proposition—I propose

If we are to be competent in knowledge, taste and judgment, we must maintain by discipline and restraint a sense of intellectual responsibility that will develop and preserve our normal powers by securing their proper exercise. We must avoid hasty or careless mental operations.

The Satisfaction of Accurate Thinking.—One of the most common hindrances in human affairs is the superficial information which mocks the efforts of a sound mind to reach accurate judgments. It spells confusion for the audience and failure for the speaker. No one need indulge in this form of negligence. We can begin at once to seek adequate information in the case of every perplexity that arises. We can cultivate the habit of knowing the facts before attempting to formulate thoughts. The returns from accurate knowledge are so immediate and so satisfying to the human mind that once we have had the thrill which they bring, we cannot well be satisfied with less. In any group

it is the more highly developed intellect that presents the best thought in the best way. Poor physique, nervous strain, faulty utterance, may prove hindrances to superior mental faculties; they can be remedied. But no amount of poise or pose, no degree of mechanical skill in speech can make up for the lack of a trained and active mind.

CHAPTER XVI

SELF-TRAINING—LANGUAGE

The Problem of Suitable Language in Group Address.—

Speech is of the moment; it is related always to a particular situation. It is more than solid thought correctly expressed. The expression must be adjusted to the audience, the occasion and the purpose of the speaker. Now the language in which you express your thought, in conversation, in conference, or in the discussions of committee work, may seldom baffle and rarely offend. But when it comes to addressing a group, a number of associates, you may find the task of wording the thought relatively difficult. Are you able to present your ideas to the group effectively, in language unmistakably clear and truly appropriate? Can you meet the demand on your control of language?¹

Readiness and Taste.—As “soloist” your flow of language must be not only ready but graceful, adapted to the various elements of the situation and free of unintended implications. Readiness of speech—fluency as some call it—is not to be confused with glibness. Careful thought and delicate adjustment are never served by mere gush of words. It is never the mere acquaintance with many words that gives command of language, but rather the power to use with discrimination the words you know. It is this flexibility of use that makes for flowing, unhurried, unaffected, unlabored and euphonious speech.

You will not associate with this desirable readiness in speech, certain failings which characterize the language habits of some who frequently address our clubs and other groups. Slang, for example, whatever we may think of its use in conversation, is

¹ See Chapters XXXI, “Words,” and XXXII, “Grouping Words,” in Part VI, for fuller treatment of some of the topics covered in this chapter.

nearly always objectionable in an address to a group. Looseness of expression, as noted in Chapter XIV on "First Aid," implies incomplete thought processes, and results in a vagueness that seriously hinders group presentation. Of the same general nature is the habit of exaggeration, for extravagant statements breed distrust of the speaker's judgment. Even more harmful to command of language in group address than in conversation is the use of bookish and borrowed phrases and worn out or trite expressions. What is said of these in Chapter XXXI is particularly applicable to group address. Your speech should be ready, but above all it should be your own.

The Problem of Grouping Words in Connected Talk.—

According to the rhetoricians, "That form of language is most excellent which yields the contained idea with the least expenditure of mental power." Surely this is what the average man seeks to do in the meeting of his club: to present his ideas in a form that will demand from his hearers the "least expenditure of mental power." Experience with conversation has shown you the importance of the right word. But you must have found also that the power of a statement in which the words used are the common names of things well known proceeds from some other principle of force in language; that the right grouping of words is even more important than the words considered by themselves.²

What is the best method of combining words in address to a group? What constitutes the intangible something that we call style? Philosophers and critics have written volumes on the subject. What you want to find is not a critical analysis of methods available, so much as the scheme of combination, the knack of sentence movement that will make your own thoughts more effective in utterance. No doubt you can discover or reaffirm certain principles from recollections of laborious processes applied to writing. But spoken language is so intimate a vehicle that we are rarely conscious of its constituents or elements, in the moment

² In connection with the pages which follow see Chapter XXXII.

of using it. In a little speech at the club meeting the devices of language are not usually distinct in the mind of the average speaker. Nevertheless, they are clear enough to the trained listener. This fact reveals the first step toward improving command of language in connected speech. Not through the printed page alone, but also through the ear comes the opportunity to learn the art of putting words together.

Listening to the Language of Others.—The club meeting is a regular channel of communication and cultivation that you can employ at once for a new purpose. You can pay attention not only to what your fellow-members say but to the manner in which they say it. You can develop, if you have not done so already, an active listening power that records, in addition to the thought presented, the scheme of arrangement that was largely the means of producing its particular effect. This critical perception based upon ear consciousness of language is the key to mastery of movement or flow in the sentence, which many of the ancients considered the most important element in good speech.

The definition of rhetoric ascribed to a certain Dionysius of Halicarnassus is still deserving careful reflection: "Rhetoric is the artistic mastery of persuasive discourse in communal affairs, having as its end to speak well."³

In listening to others so closely as to make note of elements in their language control, one may discover his own place on the scale that extends from the slangy member whose random utterances display the latest tokens of the "mentally bankrupt" to the polished citizen of the world whose meaning is unmistakable, whose words are in harmony with the situation and whose sentence movement is a positive delight to the ear. This sensibility to the movement of language, and the mental habit of which it is the result, constitute merely the first step in a phase of improvement that requires persistent effort over a considerable period of time.

³ Dionysius of Halicarnassus on Literary Composition, Edited by W. Rhys Roberts.

Supplementary Exercises.—The fuller realization thus developed of what is desirable will strengthen your desire to attain for yourself such skill in combining words. Naturally, direct effort in your own addresses to the group will help. But the opportunities may be too few for steady progress and certainly at the beginning you will be little able to give much attention to the form of your remarks. It is easier to secure such training if you can find a way to concentrate attention upon the several elements involved one by one. When one is overcome you can devote yourself to each of the others in turn.

Translation from a Foreign Tongue.—If you have a speaking knowledge of another tongue, a very pleasant and profitable means of training is at your disposal. Choose a chapter of a book, or an article in a paper, in that other language, and translate freely aloud into English. Here you have thought and direction provided. Your whole concern will be for the words and forms necessary to present that thought to other minds in English. This method has the sanction of many eminent speakers. It was one of the methods of both the elder and the younger Pitt. Lord Riddell, in a keen little essay on "The Art of Public Speaking," in his volume, "Some Things That Matter,"⁴ quotes Lord Stanhope, the biographer of Pitt, on this practice:

No man had that gift of using in public speaking the right word in the right place; no man carried that gift to a higher degree of perfection, as all parties have owned, than did Mr. Pitt. Now my father . . . ventured on one occasion to ask Mr. Pitt by what means—by what course of study—he had acquired that readiness of speech—that aptness of finding the right word. Mr. Pitt replied that whatever readiness he might be thought to possess in that respect he believed he derived very much from a practice his father, the great Lord Chatham, had enjoined on him. Lord Chatham had bid him take up any book in some foreign language with which he was well acquainted—in Latin, Greek or French, for example. He then enjoined him to read out of this work a passage in English, stopping where he was not sure of the word until the right one came and then to proceed. Mr. Pitt states that he had assiduously

⁴ G. A. Riddell, *Some Things That Matter*, Doubleday, Doran Co.

followed this practice. At first he had often to stop for a while before he could find the proper word; but he found the difficulties gradually disappear, until what was a toil to him at first became at last an easy and familiar task.

Paraphrasing.—Of course the translation from a foreign language is only one phase of a typical exercise in reproduction. You can develop skill under the same conditions by another means. Take a passage from the prose works of a recognized writer, or from the utterances of a noted speaker, and preserving the thought and purpose of the author, turn it into words and arrangements of your own choice. This is the old exercise of paraphrase. Try it with this passage from "The Spectator," written by Joseph Addison early in the eighteenth century:

When I look upon the tombs of the great, every emotion of envy dies in me; when I read the epitaphs of the beautiful every inordinate desire goes out; when I meet with the grief of parents upon a tombstone, my heart melts with compassion; when I see the tomb of the parents themselves I consider the value of grieving for those whom we must quickly follow. When I see kings lying by those who deposed them, when I consider rival wits placed side by side, or the holy men that divided the world by their contests and disputes, I reflect with sorrow and astonishment on the little competitions, factions, and debates of mankind. When I read the several dates of the tombs, of some that died yesterday and some six hundred years ago, I consider that great day when we shall all of us be contemporaries, and make our appearance together.

Developing a Statement—The "Chreia."—In the paraphrase your effort is to supply appropriate words and to fit them to the author's scheme for the thought of the passage. Here is another exercise in which, supplied with an idea, you develop it for yourself in the most effective language you can muster. Choose an old saying, or select from a work you may happen to be reading a particular assertion or remark, and without reading the author's development of the idea proceed for yourself to expand the statement in any way you please. Talk right out. Present your thoughts to a mirror in as convincing a manner as you can, or if

you have a companion in the task of improving speech technique, the two of you may profitably play audience for each other.

For this is exactly what you do in conversation, or in discussion when the statement of another draws from you the development of support or opposition. It is the thing that you are prompted to do in your club meeting. Only in this exercise you may be patient with yourself. You will have no interruptions; you can present your whole flow of thought. Just try the exercise. You will find that it provides a whole series of steps in the process of making flow of language serve the flow of thought. You will discover that the fluency we admire so much in certain others is to be had for the fair price of the application and industry required to persist in the exercises that build or help to build a valuable habit.

A Practical Device of the Greeks.—There is nothing new about this exercise. You can try it in its earliest forms. It was the device of Athonius, one of the ancient rhetoricians, who proposed to his pupils a "chreia," or suggestive sentence to be developed by certain rules.

Often the chreia was a maxim or proverb, current on the lips of the people. At times it was a statement from the writings of one of the great philosophers, or it might be the statement of a fact involving the expression of a truth. To develop any of the forms of the chreia, Athonius proposed eight different plans:

1. By commendation or approval of the saying.
2. By a paraphrase—expressing the meaning of the sentence in other words, with some further development or explanation.
3. By cause or reason—telling why the maxim is true or why the fact is as stated.
4. By indicating resemblance—illustrating by comparison with similar things.
5. By contrast—illustrating by comparison with contrary things.
6. By giving examples.

7. By citing testimonies or authorities.
8. By a conclusion or appeal addressed to the mind or heart of the listener.

The problems that vexed the ancients in their efforts to gain control of language varied little from those that trouble us today. The formulas listed by Aphthonius for developing a thought are those which have been followed in all ages. You will find them interestingly outlined, with illustrations from modern writers and speakers, in Genung's "Working Principles of Rhetoric,"⁵ or Baldwin's "Oral and Written Composition."⁶

Proverbs for Expansion.—Here are some sentences on which you may try your skill. They are proverbs, fragments of thought about life developed in the course of ages. Some are from writers of the ancient world—Egyptian, Jewish, Greek or Roman, some from writers of modern times:

Injustice is as often a sin of omission as of commission. (The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius)

Nothing can befall a man which nature has not fitted him to bear. (The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius)

The discontented man finds no easy chair. (Poor Richard)

Laws too gentle are seldom obeyed; too severe, seldom executed. (Poor Richard)

Laziness travels so slowly that poverty soon overtakes him. (Poor Richard)

Everyone blames his memory, no one blames his judgment. (Rochefoucauld)

Those who apply themselves too closely to little things often become incapable of great things. (Rochefoucauld)

The fame of great men ought always to be estimated by the means used to acquire it. (Rochefoucauld)

He is wise who learns from every man. (Talmud)

Do not sit, do not stand, do not walk excessively. (Talmud)

The eagle does not catch flies. (Latin Proverb)

The grasshopper does not satisfy the lion. (Talmud)

⁵ John Franklin Genung, *The Working Principles of Rhetoric*, Ginn & Co.

⁶ Charles Sears Baldwin, *Oral and Written Composition*, Longmans, Green & Co.

The rose is often found to be near the nettle. (Ovid)

The belly is the teacher of art and the bestower of genius. (Persius)

The mind is the master of every kind of fortune. (Seneca)

Be not proud because thou art learned; but discourse with the ignorant as with the sage. (The Instruction of Ptah Hotep)

Fair speech is more rare than the emerald that is found by slave maidens on the pebbles. (Ptah Hotep)

If he address thee as one ignorant of the matter, thine humbleness shall bear away his contentions. (Ptah Hotep)

Ways of Expanding.—Make this exercise a part of your program of improvement. Begin with one of your own favorite proverbs. Expand the familiar saying by one of the methods just enumerated. Do not resort to paper and pencil at first. Utter the sentence you have chosen for the purpose and then talk on. The first results may not be masterly samples of prose but you are not concerned about that. The thought is familiar; develop it; set it forth in an even and deliberate succession of word-groups.

Thus you might work with the maxim from the Jewish "Talmud": "He is wise who learns from every man." Your speech might run along after this fashion:

"He is wise who learns from every man. How well the ancient scribe of the Talmud expressed this truth. There is no need to search in books for confirmation of these words. On every side human nature supplies us with ample reasons for believing it. . . ."

In this development you would be simply commending or approving the statement. Try again. Speak out, do not mumble.

"He is wise who learns from every man. In other words, if I am walking with two other men, each of them will serve as my teacher. I will pick out the good points of one and imitate them, and the bad points of the other and correct them in myself"

In this amplification you would be expressing the meaning of the dictum in other words for the purpose of making the mean-

ing a little clearer. If you were not satisfied with the probable effect of your words on other minds, you might continue thus :

“ . . . For we are all of a pattern. The good qualities that I discover in one man are grafted upon the human nature that is our common possession. Therefore I may sow as he has sown upon the same soil, with hope of growing the same crop and by the same token I may see in another what evil growth may come from lack of care in choice of the seed to be planted.”

In this way you would add to the paraphrase of the maxim an explanation of its truth. Several explanations might occur to you. You will learn to choose the one or two that seem most effective. Another type of reason for the truth of this proverb might be more acceptable.

“He is wise who learns from every man. For he knows how little one man may gain by his own efforts. Each sees things from his own point of view. His vision is limited; it is conditioned by his surroundings and his training. When he talks with another of different origin, otherwise brought up, he is no longer limited to his own narrow range. He sees more. His knowledge has wider foundation.”

Use of This Exercise by the French.—The easy grace and precision in talk of the French is proverbial—a grace that many of us can appreciate because it is not altogether lost in translation. Some of it is owing to the fact that such methods of developing skill in the expansion and restatement of an idea, methods which require active application of a series of graduated exercises, have long formed a part of the education of French youth. These methods require patient and extended effort, but the results attained are certain. In our own country, except for certain of the academic church schools, such methods have long since gone out of fashion.

Applying the Exercise.—Now the principles and patterns that you make your own in working with the chreia or similar exercises are useful in the discussions that arise in club meetings.

Why not make practical application of them as soon as you can?

Whenever you speak in meeting you do so to introduce a project, or topic of discussion, or to comment upon one or the other already under consideration. In the first case the general pattern is entirely familiar. You propose something and justify your proposal. The scheme of presentation is generally this:

"I think the time has come for this association to build a new clubhouse

(*reasons*)—1.

2.

3."

When your contribution is part of a discussion already in progress you will find the motif for your pattern in the statement of another who has preceded you. The patterns are simple and they result from four characteristic reactions to what may have been said:

1. Agreement

2. Denial

3. Distinction

4. Departure

Agreement.—Whatever your introductory remark may be, when you approve the thought or judgment previously expressed you follow a very simple formula, making a positive statement as in the chreia and expanding it by one of the common methods set forth on page 229. Thus you might say:

"I agree with the statements made by Brothers Jones and Burke. (*introductory remark*) The association ought to build a new clubhouse at once. (*significant statement*) Our membership is now 1,800, a number sufficient to guarantee an income of . . . from dues alone. More members are coming in each month. The annual rental of our present quarters is sufficient. (*reasons*)"

Denial.—In opposition or denial the formula is equally simple. To one of the statements previously made you wish to present your refutation. In this case, too, you will, with or with-

out introductory remark, make a pertinent statement, this time a negative statement, which you will proceed to justify by one or more of the familiar means of amplification.

"This is not the time to build a new clubhouse. (*significant statement*) Surely the previous speaker has neglected a number of important considerations. (*courteous indication of disagreement*) The membership is of peculiar nature great annual variation of number of paid memberships Cost of building at present time The present financial impossibility of erecting really adequate building, the futility of new house soon inadequate (*reasons—justification*)"

Distinction.—It frequently happens that the remarks of a previous speaker are such that you cannot fully agree with him, while on the other hand, you cannot wholly disagree. What formula shall you employ? Your answer is easy. You simply distinguish. The pattern is generally double. You employ a negative statement to oppose one element of the speaker's contention, and a positive statement for that upon which you are agreed. In this type of expression it is useful to repeat the statement of the previous speaker.

"The gentleman says that we have just realized a handsome profit on the sale of our old athletic field and that therefore we ought to build a new clubhouse at once. That we have a substantial profit on the sale of the field no one would deny. . . . That because we have this profit we ought to build a clubhouse at once does not seem valid reasoning to me. The considerations upon which any organization might base a decision to build are"

Sometimes we cannot either agree or disagree with the proposition advanced by a speaker because we do not know which of two possible interpretations of his words is the one he intended. In that case the distinction you will make is one of definition:

"If the gentleman means I agree, etc. If he means by I oppose his contention. It seems to me (*reasons*)"

Departure.—On occasion you may find that the discussion is showing a tendency to go far afield. What you have to say is not related to what has been said by the previous speakers. You then adopt the simple expedient of restating the original problem, calling attention to the fact that the discussion has wandered, and suggesting a return to the subject. By means of a significant statement and proper justification you seek to reshape the course of the discussion.

These Exercises a Constant Aid.—These exercises are in no sense simply illustrative. They are of the utmost practical assistance. You wish not only to understand the theory of fluent and pleasing speech, but to acquire actual control of language, to develop the habit of control. You can afford to spend a great deal of time on these exercises. You will find that your progress is marked by several distinct stages of accomplishment. At first you will be at pains to talk at all; your attention will be engrossed in the effort merely of “making sense” and of employing correct forms. Later the flow of talk will be sufficient and your chief concern will be with meaning; you will try to secure a certain exactness or precision. Then your growing power will make it possible for you to devote attention to arrangement and effect. Finally you will not be content with your flow of speech unless it pleases the ear, unless it has melody and rhythm.

You must be conscious of the smoothness that certain speakers exhibit in the flow of the words they employ. When you think about it and when you take the trouble to observe more carefully the sound-efforts that they are able to achieve, you are making a beginning in the study of rhythm, as applied in connected speech.

Rhythm in All Speech.—Rhythm runs through all language, whatever the subject. As is pointed out more fully in Chapter XXXII, the listener’s ear picks up not single sounds, single syllables, or even single words, but phrases, clauses, and sentences. Similarly, the vocal machinery of the speaker handles not individual sounds, syllables, or words, but groups of words.

To utter a sentence containing no more than ten words—say, sixteen syllables—with the rapidity of ordinary speech, would be virtually impossible, except by grouping the sounds with an alternation of loud and soft. As in a single word there is an accented syllable and with it one or more syllables that are sounded lightly, so with a clause, a sentence, or a connected series of sentences. One word, one syllable of that word, will be uttered more loudly and usually more slowly than the rest of the group. In general the successive groups—the clauses and sentences—tend to group themselves in waves of somewhat similar length of time, so that the whole passage has a measured flow.

We all recognize and allow for rhythm in poetry, but it is present, though in less marked form, whenever language is built together in a connected pattern. It appears almost as plainly as in poetry whenever anyone is talking earnestly in connected speech—when scolding, or expressing eager delight, or carrying on a lively argument in conversation, or when making a speech. It appears in the following passage quoted by Percy Mackaye, from the conversation of an old Kentucky mountaineer.

Yea, Sir, hit war the first cold spell that come, right when the grapes is about all gone and the rest of the berry tribe, between the turnin' of the weeds under and the dyin' of food, and thar comes a gang of jay-birds, and they fills the mind with poetry.

The Rhythm of the Rail.—Years ago there used to be posted in street-cars a notice which stated, for the benefit of the traveling public, the duties of conductors with respect to the current form of tickets. It ran somewhat as follows:

The conductor, when he receives a fare, shall punch, in the presence of the passenger, a blue trip-slip for a three-cent fare; a green trip-slip for a five-cent fare; a buff trip-slip for an eight-cent fare, etc.

Mark Twain convulsed the country one day with a revelation of the rhythm in this matter-of-fact notice, by merely printing it in verse form with the beat slightly exaggerated to keep time with the sound of the car-wheels on the rails.

The conductor, when he receives a fare,
Shall punch in the presence of the passen-jare
A blue trip-slip for a three-cent fare,
A green trip-slip for a five-cent fare,
A buff trip-slip for an eight-cent fare,
All in the presence of the passen-jare.

The last line, it is true, was Mark's own contribution, as was the chorus—supposed to be rendered by the conductors—

Punch, brothers, punch with care,
Punch in the presence of the passen-jare
A blue-trip slip for a three-cent fare,
A green trip-slip, etc., etc.

Rhythm in Advertisements.—Rhythm is found no less in almost any well-written advertisement. Here is the heading and first paragraph of a *Saturday Evening Post* advertisement of a towel company:

What Do You Expect of a Towel?
Quick drying? Softness? Snow-white appearance?
Long wear? Low price? Good looks?

This is just an ordinary ad. But observe how definitely the sounds are grouped to be easy for the voice to utter.

Here are the first paragraphs of another advertisement.

Six years ago, Mr. Guy McKittrick of Pennsylvania needed more money—and in a hurry. So he scissored out a coupon like the one above, received a big friendly envelope—and found in it details of a plan so simple, so easy, that he was able not long after to write:

"My first twenty hours of spare time work paid me about \$20.00, and I have since made \$8.00 for six hours' spare time work."

The success which Mr. McKittrick attained was not "a flash in the pan."

In strict accuracy, we should not say that some passages are rhythmical and others not, but that some have a rhythm which is regular enough to be pleasing and to reinforce properly the general meaning of the passage, and others have a rhythm which is so

broken, so extreme, or so inappropriate that it interferes with the general effect.

Developing the Sense of Rhythm.—Now when you are at your best, thoroughly absorbed in the presentation of a point to a listener, or a group, the rhythm of your talk is good. Nature takes care of the spacing. The muscles are fully coordinated and automatically adjust the sounds according to their sense. Generally, however, when you are less fully concentrated emotionally upon your message, you fail of such coordination. What is needed is systematic observation, continual experiment with the detail technique of rhythm and spacing.

No brief set of rules will give you the secret of command of rhythm. You must cultivate your own ear. You cannot fail to recall the satisfaction to the ear in a fairly decent oral reading of the Twenty-third Psalm. Perhaps as a boy you knew it by heart. Read it again, aloud, noting and bringing out the emphasis points, sentence by sentence. You will find that they are as clearly recognizable in this bit of impassioned prose as in Mark Twain's jingle.

Then read the selections given on the following pages, paying attention primarily not to the thought but to the *effect of each passage upon the ear*. Take first the account by the English writer William Hazlitt, in his volume on "The English Poets," of the talk of that strange genius, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the author of "The Ancient Mariner." Hazlitt is recalling an experience of his own youth, when for the first time he sat in an eager group and listened to the man who was perhaps the most eloquent talker of his time. Recall some occasion of your own youth—still vivid in your mind though perhaps you do not speak of it to others—when you sat in the presence of a man whose message thrilled you. Try to recall that mood as you read aloud Hazlitt's picture of his feelings when Coleridge talked:

He was the first poet I ever knew. His genius at that time had angelic wings, and fed on manna. He talked on forever. His thoughts

did not seem to come with labor and effort, but as if borne on the gusts of genius, and as if the wings of his imagination lifted him from off his feet. His voice rolled on the ear like the pealing organ, and its sound alone was the music of thought. His mind was clothed with wings; and raised on them, he lifted philosophy to heaven. In his descriptions, you then saw the progress of human happiness and liberty in bright and never-ending succession, like the steps of Jacob's Ladder, with airy shapes ascending and descending, and with the voice of God at the top of the ladder. And shall I, who heard him then, listen to him now? Not I. . . . That spell is broken; that time is gone forever; that voice is heard no more; but still the recollection comes rushing by with thoughts of long past years, and rings in my ears with never dying sound.

Here is a passage from Cardinal Newman, the Englishman whose style was characterized by Matthew Arnold, himself a master of language in both prose and poetry, as "a religious music, subtle, sweet, mournful." Newman speaks in "The Idea of a University," of the very matter discussed in this chapter, the power of language in the hands of a great writer who can utter his thought not only with clearness and force, but with charm.

Let us consider, too, how differently young and old are affected by the words of some classic author, such as Homer or Horace. Passages, which to a boy are but rhetorical commonplaces, neither better nor worse than a hundred others, which any clever writer might supply, which he gets by heart and thinks very fine, and imitates, as he thinks, successfully, in his own flowing versification, at length come home to him, when long years have passed, and he has had experience of life, and pierce him as if he had never before known them, with their sad earnestness and vivid exactness. Then he comes to understand how it is that lines, the birth of some chance morning or evening at an Ionian festival, or among the Sabine hills, have lasted generation after generation, for thousands of years, with a power over the mind and a charm which the current literature of his own day, with all its obvious advantages, is utterly unable to rival. Perhaps this is the reason of the medieval opinion about Virgil, as of a prophet or a magician; his single words and phrases, his pathetic half-lines; giving utterance, as the voice of nature herself, to that pain and weariness, yet hope of better things, which is the experience of her children in every time.⁷

⁷ See page 163.

Here, finally, is a passage which Professor George Saintsbury of the University of Edinburgh—looked up to as perhaps the best qualified judge of good writing among Englishmen of recent times, by reason of his range of knowledge and keenly sympathetic taste—has called “one of the highest points of English prose.” It is from the Sixtieth Chapter of Isaiah :

Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be to thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw herself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.

You will find it keenly instructive to try repeating these passages to a dictating machine, distributing the accent and spacing out the syllables to fit the rhythm which your eyes and ears perceive, as a singer spaces out the words of a song. Perhaps you will not at first succeed in reproducing, with your voice, the suggestions which your ears and eyes will catch. Try it again every few days. After a while you will find the words falling into place, your tongue will make some words and phrases stand out sharply and duly subordinate others, until at last you can suggest by your rendering the full meaning which repeated reading will have brought out to your mind.

Practice of these passages—as well, perhaps, as those in Chapter XXI or in the chapters of Part V—analyzing their *sound-structure* and the way it contributes to the meaning, will surely develop keener sensitiveness of ear, eye and vocal muscles to the methods of grouping words which secure rhythmical and pleasing flow. If you can recognize and enjoy the rhythm-structure and suggestions of what you read, and what you hear, you are likely before long to begin applying in your own speech, in

ways that are appropriate to the occasions of your talk, the principles of grouping which these artists in words have followed.

Listening to other speakers—in club meetings, on public platforms, on the stage, over the radio, in ordinary conversation—and experimentation with dictating machine and phonograph—will steadily develop command of rhythm. First-hand experimentation with rhythm is one of the most valuable phases of your study of speech. It will improve your manner of talk in every sort of contact.

CHAPTER XVII

SELF-TRAINING—DELIVERY

Utilizing Natural Nervousness.—It is very likely that you will never get over being nervous when you have to make a speech. Perhaps no one does. But you will learn to control and utilize your nervousness. It is compounded, indeed, of two quite different elements. There is, first, the natural aversion for a task not yet habitual and about which men have curious notions. In addition there is an entirely normal excitement which is of the very nature of the act of speaking to an audience.

The first of these elements can be gradually reduced to a negligible factor through intelligent effort in practice. The genuine nervous reaction to the demands of the occasion is really an aid to good speaking, not at all an obstacle to be feared. It is rather a sensibility to the audience and the occasion; it serves as a spur to urge the mind into the high tension that is appropriate for the activity of communicating with a group.

The Remedy—"Knowing the Ropes."—The lack of confidence amounting to distress that sometimes develops even with those who are well qualified to speak in public is due to fear of making a poor impression, in an act that calls for unfamiliar adjustments. It is somewhat like the perplexity as to which fork to use at dinner, magnified many times. Knowledge of what is generally accepted as good form, or what is thoroughly appropriate in a situation, goes a long way toward removing the causes of such a difficulty.

When you sit on the end of the table in the lounge of your club and exchange ideas with your cronies you probably observe all the niceties of contact that the occasion requires, with no

thought at all of that fact. It is the same in all conversations with familiar associates. You communicate your thoughts with very little concern about delivery. You already have some sort of mastery of the procedure of ordinary talk and you put your mind on the situation and its requirements. With the connected talk required in addressing a group, a different problem is to be met. The comfort of sitting on the end of the table is not appropriate for speaking your mind at a meeting. There a certain dignity is looked for. The wholly formal atmosphere of the public gathering is lacking but the situation demands a technique of delivery that differs from the one you employ in conversation.

You will find it helpful to develop the practice suggested in the preceding chapters, of observing what others do in meeting; what manner of speech seems best; how the little courtesies are best rendered; how the skilful speaker makes his way in discussion. You will find that minor points of delivery often mount by neglect into considerable obstacles to communication. On the other hand, easy command of the auxiliaries of speech enunciation, voice, and physical expression, will aid at every turn your effectiveness in presenting a matter to the club audience.¹

Importance of Delivery in Informal Public Address.—The characteristics which count in connected talk, just as in conversation, are simplicity, vividness, frankness, heartiness, friendliness. If a speaker has these qualities, it is easy for people to listen; he makes them want to listen. Somewhere in his speech the listeners are made to feel that he knows what he is talking about and is competent to handle the matter. In every truly successful speech that impression is produced.

It might be supposed that art is not needed in the informal address of club and association meetings and among persons one knows well. Not so. It is needed even more in such a situation, to give variety, to avoid monotony of effect. The itinerant evangelist may be able to "get away" with almost any peculiarities,

¹ Chapters XXXIII, XXXIV and XXXV discuss these topics in detail.

but the man who must preach to the same people every week needs to be able to vary his manner. And the arts of delivery can be developed only gradually, for they depend upon development and coördination of muscle and nerve reactions to stimulus.

Nevertheless, by means of systematic observation of other speakers and analysis of your own practice, it is possible to work out for yourself an effective course of training. You can build gradually habits of control and ready utilization of the auxiliaries of voice and manner.

Enunciation.—First, the matter of clear enunciation. When addressing a group, articulation takes on heightened importance. It needs to be sharper and slightly more formal. In conversation you do not want to appear to be taking pains about distinctness. The listener should catch what you say without particularly noticing how you say it. But in public speaking, even when the group is small, a slight extra crispness in sounding consonants and a clear discrimination of vowels is needed to balance the louder tone.

Consonants.—In all group address it is wise to exaggerate somewhat the consonant movements. For example, take care about the first syllable of the first word of a statement, particularly of a section of the speech. Note the good effect of clear-cut, yet easy tones, at the beginning of a sentence. Very often, with an inexperienced speaker, we lose the opening word or even the opening sentence. In a word of two syllables with accent on the second, a very general tendency is to telescope the opening syllable. You may think that this does not matter much in ordinary conversation, but when addressing a group it hurts your effect and tends to make your talk appear sloppy.

In Chapter XXXIII you will find a discussion of what have been called "nests of consonants," which are very plentiful in English. In conversation, the practice of slurring such groups of sounds, saying, for instance, *nes' of 'onsonants*, may pass un-

noticed. But when up before a group such slurring is apt to be *felt* by the listeners, though they may not know what is wrong. They just feel that it is hard to understand the speaker.

Take especial care, also, of the final consonants of words. There is no fault more common among amateur speakers. It interferes seriously with distinctness and gives one's utterance an effect of slovenliness that ill accords with any careful thinking. "Bite on the last letter," says an excellent English book entitled "Clear Speaking and Good Reading."²

Better not talk too fast. If you address a group at the rate which you employ in conversation it is likely to be too fast for the slower listeners, as noted in Chapter XIII. You cannot alter your rate of speaking by a single effort of will, but by remembering, as you speak, to allow yourself time always to shape the backbone consonants with full accuracy you will gradually overcome the impulse to hurry.

Attention to "Key" Consonants.—The tendency to spotty articulation should be watched at all times. Many persons, though they sound some words plainly, blur the utterance of other words equal in significance. A fault which is almost universal is that of dropping the voice at the end of a sentence. On the other hand, avoid mere *mo-no-ton-ous* utterance, with all words evenly spaced and equally stressed. That is not natural. It suggests at once to listeners that the speaker is not concerned directly with his message, but with mere mechanics of utterance. The remedy for all such faults lies in frequently analyzing individual sentences, to select the *key consonants* of each clause, and then practicing the passage until your muscle action becomes ready and sure.

Some years ago the head of the training department of a great retail store was a woman whose voice was exceedingly light—hardly more than a whisper. But her enunciation was almost perfect. When called on to address an audience, as often she was, her speeches carried easily to large audiences in big rooms.

² Arthur Burrell, *Clear Speaking and Good Reading*, Longmans, Green & Co.

It is a useful exercise to attempt, now and then, to make yourself heard, as this lady did, by employing an extra-light tone with extra-careful enunciation.

Practice with a dictating machine may be particularly helpful here. Dictate a portion of your speech to the machine and then turn back and listen to what you have said. A useful plan is to memorize a paragraph of a speech and recite this to the dictating machine. Then, after some weeks have elapsed, again recite the same passage to the machine and see what changes you have made. If you find memorizing too difficult, you can obtain somewhat the same effect from reading the passage aloud, as explained in Chapter XXI.

Vowels.—Accuracy in sounding vowels is one of the most difficult points to master. Our vowels continually elude our ear. We may suppose that we are sounding *ee*, when in fact it is a dull *i* as in *it*. A New Yorker may find himself saying *oily boyd* when he intends to say *early bird*; or *burling earl* when he thinks he is saying *boiling oil*. The vowel exercises in Chapter XXXIII, if practiced regularly, will be very useful at this point. The informal speeches called for in connection with club and association meetings provide a natural way of practicing. After making a speech, while it is still somewhat fresh in your mind, write a short passage as nearly as possible as you gave it. Then go over the passage deliberately, underline the vowels with a pencil, and afterward read the passage slowly aloud, trying to give each vowel its accurate sound. Or take a short passage from one of the speeches in Part V. Go over it first for *ee*'s, then for *a*'s, *o*'s, etc. Then put them together. An occasional patient analysis of this sort will give you many useful suggestions. You will find it interesting and profitable to obtain some phonograph records of the speeches of public men. The different phonograph companies have a variety of these. Play one of them over and over, and study it. Recite a portion of it to the dictating machine, and compare your version with that of the speaker on the

phonograph. You may find that your own utterance has “holes” in it here and there, consonants that you fail to utter, vowels that you blur. On the other hand, you are not at all unlikely to discover that your own utterance is quite as good, at various points, as that of the phonograph record.

Improvement of the Voice.³—You will find it possible to do a great deal to improve the quality and effectiveness of your voice. In the discussion of “Voice” in Chapter XXXIV, it is pointed out that any substantial improvement of the voice calls, in its first stages, for the aid of a good teacher. But in connection with the informal speeches to club or association you will find excellent opportunities for continuing and carrying further the application of your instructor’s suggestions. In ordinary conversation it is only too easy to forget your “method,” to neglect the steady care for breathing and the deliberate “placing” of the tone. In speeches to the club audience, however, after you are past the uneasiness of the first attempts, you have constant opportunity to practice right methods of producing the tone.

When talking to one person or to a small group, the tone should be light and unobtrusive. Addresses to larger groups should be uttered in tones full enough for everyone to hear easily. The inexperienced speaker frequently speaks to an audience in a tone that makes listening an effort. The skilful speaker has conscious control of his voice. In addressing a large group he is careful to place the voice and intensify the tone so that without loudness his words carry clearly to every ear in the hall. For a moment, as you begin to speak to an audience, you will *hear* your own voice. In that brief interval you can accommodate your tones to the room or hall in which you are speaking.

Attention has been called in Chapter XIV to the matter of the general level of pitch when addressing a group, the desirability of avoiding tones that are high and shrill. In controversy or debate, we are constantly impelled to use high pitch; unless we are careful,

³ Chapter XXXIV, Voice, discusses this topic in detail.

the voice is almost certain to become shrill and hard. Therefore, in all discussion or argument, cultivate the habit of keeping your voice down. When beginning a public address, especially in a large place, use a moderately low pitch. Make it a habit to pause every now and then during a speech to take a few deep breaths. That relaxes the tension of the muscles of tongue and throat and enables you to resume a pitch that is appropriate to the thought.

Look at the Audience.—No manner of speech is effective if you fail to look at your audience. Pick out one person and look at him, then at another, and so on. Speak with your eyes, as well as with words, as you do in conversation. When the eye drops or wavers, the spell of communication is broken. Frequently, in a critical moment such as this, the audience is lost to the speaker. Audience and speaker, each remains conscious of the other's presence—but communication has ceased. The members of the audience have escaped to the byways of their own minds; the speaker soliloquizes. The speaker may become conscious of this lapse and strive valiantly to remedy the situation. His hope lies in sheer power of will over wills—the energy that is in him communicates itself through the eye. Louder and higher tones reveal panic on the part of the speaker. You must draw your hearers to the subject. Do not chase them with it.

The Art of Standing Still.⁴—As a rule, stand still when you address the club audience, if you desire the full attention of the audience to what you have to say. It is the common usage of good manners to stand still. Try it before the mirror. Stand still for a minute or two. First stand with the body erect, weight evenly distributed on both feet, knees straight, and hands hanging naturally. Note the effect in the mirror. Then shift to what is known as the *speaker's position*, with one foot slightly advanced and the weight on the other foot. Perhaps the best description of this "orator's attitude" is the one in "Tristram

⁴ Chapter XXXV, *Physical Expression*, discusses in detail the topics covered in the next pages.

Shandy,"⁵ the whimsical eighteenth century novel by Dr. Laurence Sterne, where Corporal Trim, Uncle Toby's body-servant, reads aloud the sermon to his master, Mr. Walter Shandy, and Dr. Slop:

. . . Before the Corporal begins, I must give you a description of his attitude;—otherwise he will naturally stand represented by your imagination in an uneasy posture—stiff—perpendicular—dividing the weight of his body equally upon both legs;—his eye fixed, as if on duty;—his look determined, clenching the sermon in his left hand, like his firelock.—In a word, you would be apt to paint Trim as if he was standing in his platoon, ready for action. His attitude was as unlike all this as you can conceive.

He stood before them with his body swayed and bent forwards, just as far as to make an angle of eighty-five degrees and a half upon the plane of the horizon;—his right leg from under him, sustaining seven-eighths of his whole weight—the foot of his left leg advanced a little, not laterally, nor forwards, but in a line betwixt them;—his knee bent, but that not violently—but so as to fall within the limits of the line of beauty; and, I add, of the line of science too;—for consider, it had one-eighth part of his body to bear up; so that, in this case, the position of the leg is determined—because the foot could be no farther advanced or the knee **more** bent, than what would allow him, mechanically, to receive an eighth part of his whole weight under it, and carry it too.

. . . This I recommend to painters; need I add,—to orators?—I think not; for unless they practice it,—they must fall upon their noses.

So much for Corporal Trim's body and legs.—He held the sermon loosely,—not carelessly, in his left hand, raised something above his stomach, and detached a little from his breast;—his right arm falling negligently by his side, as nature and the laws of gravity ordered it—but with the palm of it open and turned towards his audience, ready to aid the sentiment in case it stood in need.

Gestures.—You may be impelled, when you grow earnest in your addresses before the club audience, to "make gestures." When speaking you are presumed to be wholly interested in the case you are presenting. Modification of posture, movements of face, arms, body, all these are a natural accompaniment to the flow of words and of your feelings. The whole body is sym-

⁵ Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*. Gent.

pathetic. Gestures are not mechanical aids to expression. When they are authentic, and natural, they spring from the thought and emotion of the moment, constituting extra channels of communication, to supply the momentary insufficiency of language and voice. Note the gesture made by Marshal Foch at the close of his speech in London, as reported at the end of Chapter XXXV.

Some good speakers make no gestures. Others utilize them frequently. Only the unthinking "put in a gesture once in a while because it is expected!" Vigorous, natural, spontaneous gestures are usually expressive and suitable. Mechanical tricks such as consciously wagging the forefinger, shaking the fist, striking the hands together, are to be avoided. Let the feeling show in the entire body—not just in the nod of the head or swing of an arm. The whole body takes part in even a small forearm gesture. In your private practice try delivering before a mirror some of the passages in Part V. Note the postures and the gestures, if any, which occur to your mind. Practice these and see what you look like.

Do not overdo movement, however. After you gain facility you will probably feel a constant temptation to act out your speeches. Better hold this in check. Too many movements, however graceful and dramatic, give a suggestion of theatricality. One should have full, easy command of bodily and facial expression, but should employ only a little at any one time. The intimacy of the club meeting may lead you to relax too much the necessary reserve of dignity.

Simplicity and Directness.—There is nothing "tricky" about good delivery. It is not made up of absurd gesticulation, loud tones, facial contortions. It is not marked in the individual by a noisy shallowness and great confidence. You will be aided in avoiding a manner that is perfunctory and apathetic and in manifesting a degree of enthusiasm which is appropriate, if you will keep steadily in mind the nature of your task—which is to reach the minds of plain people by simple, friendly statement. This is

the way of good nature and common sense. It is the kind of speaking that appeals to educated and uneducated alike. It is the kind of expression that comes naturally from grasp of the matter in hand and adjustment to the audience actually present. But simplicity and directness of utterance do not involve your accepting a handicap which you can remove. The sincere talk of a man deeply interested in his subject and sensitive to his audience is improved and made more effective by intelligent command of the powers of expression.



PART IV

PRIVATE HOURS

In short, the first duty of a man is to speak; that is his chief business in this world; and talk, which is the harmonious speech of two or more, is by far the most accessible of pleasures. It costs nothing in money; it is all profit; it completes our education, founds and fosters our friendships, and can be enjoyed at any age and in almost any state of health.—

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON: Talk and Talkers.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE FAMILY CIRCLE

Every Man's Two Lives.—"Every man," a quaint old saying runs, "has two lives: one of external success and his own!" For every one of us, however engrossed in his vocation, there is a life away from business, an escape from the day's round of thought—his home circle and the little company of his intimate friends. There the struggle for existence gives place to the realization of existence. The activities of the day are means to an end; those of private hours are an end in themselves. Doing the things one likes, following his hobbies, filling the rôles of son and brother, husband and father, and friend, bring into play sides of a man's nature unsuspected by those who know him only in business.

Opportunities and Responsibilities.—In those hours, as always, there are responsibilities as well as pleasures. Home is a place of companionship, and that brings responsibilities toward others. These are not light, not to be discharged automatically. Generally the matters which worry us most keenly have to do with family and intimates. In the office, business routine builds up a defense against business worry. Because of the very complexity of present-day division of labor, when the individual has done his part, small or large, the task and the responsibility passes to some one else. But at home and with our intimates, chances of misunderstanding are always present. The closer the friends, the sharper the worry. "Those to whom we have given keys to our heart," the old saying runs, "can enter, to excite and disturb us at any time." Home is also a workshop where you have responsibilities toward yourself, in the way of self-training to

discharge better the duties of business, social, and perhaps civic life. From both points of view, speech is a matter of the utmost importance in the life of our private hours. Intimate companionship involves constant use of the arts of speech. In self-cultivation, which private hours make possible, deliberate study of the arts of speech has also a very large place.

The Home a Social Unit.—Some keen observers have asserted that in American homes there is less all-round companionship than in European homes of the same grade, and that the American family circle does much less than the European for the development of its members, for training in the arts of social utility and intercourse which cannot be learned in school. If this criticism is in any degree just, in what way does the responsibility come back upon Father? Beyond question, many a man who manages the contacts of his business day with ease and success will admit to himself that he falls short of what he would like in the contacts of his own home. The jibes of the cartoonists, picturing the American father now as the pack-horse for the family's convenience, now as a sort of star-boarder, have perhaps an uncomfortable basis of truth.

Concerning the more intimate relations of the family comments from the outside would be clumsy if not impertinent. But a family circle is, after all, a group of individuals living at close quarters, and light may perhaps be thrown upon some of its problems of adjustment by the sort of objective analysis already applied to the contacts of office and club.

The communication of the family is essentially different from that of the business day. The home relationship is permanent and involuntary, not entered into for profit, work, or pleasure, but for all-round living, "for better, for worse." The issues in home contacts are personal; they are ruled by feeling, not by reason or wish for profit. It is a place of poignancy of feeling and delicacy of expression.

The Heart of the Difficulty—Two Lives, Two Speeds.—

Shortcomings in Father's discharge of the responsibilities of family life generally result from the intensity of his other life, his vocation. He fails to throw off his preoccupation with the duties of the day. While corporeally at home, too often he is in spirit still in his place of business, unable to participate in the life of the family group. Modern intensity of work, the effort to keep up with the machines we are directing, has brought into our personal life difficulties that are new in the history of the race.

Business a High-Tension Life.—Our age is marked, it is true, by growing consideration of leisure. The old-time man of business who boasted that he never took a vacation is virtually extinct. The business executive of today plays golf, goes to the ball game, and off to the fishing streams. The workman, with his guaranteed eight-hour day, may enjoy even more leisure than the manager, who is apt to be thinking of his work on golf course and trout stream. Women have much more leisure than their grandmothers or their mothers had. Though servants are rare, our houses are small; many labor-saving machines are available and many of the old-time house-maintenance duties are done outside by business firms. Women have time today for even more varied interests—social, educational, philanthropic—than most men.

But is not this conscious effort for leisure in itself evidence that we are working harder than our forefathers did? The old-time work-day was far less strenuous than ours, less exhausting, for managers and workers alike. The Ford factory is only an extreme of what we all experience. Today, for a man in active professional or business life, working hours are a time of somber concentration. They run at high tension. Thought and will are focused on one subject. The old days blended work and relaxation; there was always time to stop and chat. Today a man's time is budgeted. The persons whom he meets are all related in some way to the enterprises in which he is engaged. Incidental inter-

ruptions, lunch-time with acquaintances, and the like, affect little the main current of his thoughts.

Home a Low-Tension Life.—And then, after a day in this racing mood, when banker, salesman, works manager, accountant, physician, crosses his own threshold, he enters a different world.

At home existence is not at high tension. The members of the household group are individuals, but they are not specialists engrossed in separate activities; they are partners and chums. Each is expected to share the interests of the others, to have plenty of time for whatever comes up. But it is not easy for a man who has been thinking business all day to put it out of his mind and move at the family pace through the family interests. Even though Father's preoccupation does not extend to actual disregard of what the others are engaged in, his engine still drives at the work-day speed. The prominent physician who remarked to a friend, "My wife is just beginning to realize that a man can't run eighty miles an hour for the working day and suddenly slow down when he gets home," was a little aggrieved at the family's lack of consideration. Apparently he did not realize the strain upon the family of having to speed up their evenings to eighty miles an hour.

When topics come up in the leisurely chat of children or wife, Father too often gives his opinion in the crisp, brief manner of the business day, and is through. He has not the least feeling of unkindness, but to the others he is likely to seem impatient and bored. Or some little household plan is talked of tentatively, and Father moves with discouraging promptness to carry out whatever he thinks the others want, not realizing that for them the leisurely playing with pros and cons is a large part of the pleasure. His very readiness to fall in with anything accentuates to the others his own aloofness, his lack of concern with the things that to them mean a great deal.

Taking Work Home—The Man.—Then there is the matter of taking work home. It is a costly practice. Not so much be-

cause of the extra hours of business labor for Father as because of the draft upon the reserves of home time. As a rule the addict to this practice does not at all realize how much time he is taking, or how great is the strain he is putting on the other members of the family group.

Not long ago the manager of a large paint factory was invited to subscribe for a business magazine. He wrote in reply, "I can't afford to take time from the business day to read your paper, and I don't believe in taking work home." The magazine people wrote again to urge that reading the magazine even in business hours would save him both time and money, and in a few days came a letter from the paint man enclosing his subscription and adding: "I happened to tell my wife about your letter, and how I told you I didn't believe in taking work home, and she said 'You'd better not talk. You've been bringing home work six nights a week for twenty years.'"

If home were merely an adjunct to the office, a sort of cot where the worker may stretch out for a time when off watch, the conduct of the writer of this letter would be proper enough. But if home companionship is valuable in itself, the man who permits himself to be dominated by his business mood during the home hours is taking a long chance.

—**The Woman.**—It may be remarked that a woman often "takes work home" in another sense. The house is her office and shop. Her danger is that of dwelling too entirely within its atmosphere. Her great need is of regular outside contacts and activities that will take her away from the home for a part of the time so that the horizon of her days may not be the skyline of household routine. The twentieth century is not the day of Milton's Eve who thought only of household cares. It is to be recalled also that the formula of the "Paradise" household—"He for God only; she for God in him," worked badly even then. If the wife had given some attention to the angel Gabriel's lectures upon theology and economics instead of preferring to wait for simpli-

fied tutoring by Adam, perhaps she might have been more on her guard when that first high-pressure salesman sold her the apple.

Communication and Companionship.—The problem of communication in the home is a much more delicate affair than in the office, where relationships are partial and based ultimately upon self-interest. Here we are dealing with inmost sensibilities. It is not only courtesy that is needed but entire considerateness of intention; not loyalty of action merely, but devoted allegiance. Communication in one's own household is a problem whose elements differ as regards each member of the family group.

The art of companionship is no matter of precept or of rule. Yet we know it can be learned and applied. What too often hinders its development is lack of command of speech—the fact that neither children nor parents have acquired the indispensable habit of showing frankly their interest in one another's activities. Is not this the reason for parents' complaints that children are always running to the neighbors', and children's complaints that parents have no time to play with them?

For there is apt to be a sort of spiritual shyness among those of the same family, the complement of their spiritual sympathy. In many respects it is easier for us to confide in outsiders than in our own blood kin. With outsiders we can stop where we wish, but whatever we tell our kin we must live with, forever. This "natural" shyness among relatives has to be overcome and a steady purpose of cooperation has to be developed in the members of the household before the home is able to do its full part in their lives. The art of companionship does not come of itself. We cannot just wait for impulse to prompt brothers or sisters, children or wife to find out our inner thoughts and feelings or to tell us of their own. We have to "open up" to them, win their confidence, melt their shyness. And Americans do not wear their hearts on their sleeves. We are not demonstrative of affection or confidence.

Rewards.—The responsibility of establishing and maintaining frank communication in the home is many-sided. We have to live with and live down our mistakes. But if there are none of the convenient limitations of office or club relationships, the possibilities of home companionship in terms of usefulness and satisfaction are also without limit. The home associates are of a man's own nature and capacities; their deepest interests are his. He is not developing office-boys or assistants who will some day leave him, but bringing out the possibilities of his own children—and every stroke counts.

Success in this task crowns any life. Rank in the business or professional world has little to do with it. It is an achievement that is individual and personal.

Fifteen years ago in a Boston suburb lived a young lawyer with his wife and three children. Man and wife were keen, tense and "hard to live with," one preoccupied with an exacting practice and the other with an infinity of household cares and contrivings. Everything pointed to a reproduction of the decorous, lonely households of their Massachusetts ancestors. But the outcome has been altogether different. It is a real home. And very evidently it is Father who is responsible. He must have addressed himself deliberately to the problem of household companionship, applying the same keen persistence as in the business of his clients. Rigorous still in business, it is said, at home he is genial of attitude and easy of speech, a good companion for children, wife and neighbors. Mother is still centered within the walls of her home, but she has lost all suggestion of acidity and aloofness. The result shows best of all in the children. They are nice youngsters, whose individualities have been preserved and developed but who have acquired insensibly the priceless art of getting along with other people.

The Courtesies of Society.—While preoccupation is harmful, too great relaxation is also harmful. Are we not all, Father included, inclined to overlook the little, unwritten rules of the game

in our conversation with the home folks, to relax a little the standards of politeness that we observe automatically with strangers? However intimate the group, thoughtless frankness is neither kind nor wise. To make meaning and need intelligible to friends and family, requires vigilant and constant care. It is only too easy for a tired man to be dull and reticent, to speak in riddles for lack of the effort to adapt thoughts to the home listeners, to speak with an apparent roughness which he does not mean. Further, a man often talks too long in his own house about matters which hold his individual attention. He imposes upon the good nature of wife, children and friends within his gates, forcing them to listen too long and with too little profit.

There is a tendency among Americans to associate "small talk" with exterior politeness and strangers, to regard it as somehow insincere and therefore out of place in the home circle. Yet where can the small change of conversation serve us so well as in the home? It can save us from being gruff and cold when we should be spontaneous and light. There was keen criticism in the remark of a wife to her husband: "You always have to *say* something when you talk. You can't talk about *nothing*!" The power of nonsense, of the odd flashes of active minds just playing over a subject, is not always realized in home life. Happy the family in which quaint phrases and old time jests have power to recall past pleasures, and behind the sparkle of young eyes and the quiet twinkle of older ones to quicken the sense of companionship.

Willingness To Listen.—Another error to which Father is sometimes given is an undue sense of responsibility for making his family, particularly his children, think and act correctly in little matters. If he succeeds, which fortunately is but seldom, the result is a set of minor prigs. What is more serious, he kills the possibility of real companionship with his children. Stevenson's remark in his "Christmas Sermon" still holds good: "One person I have to make good—myself. My duty to my neighbor is to make him happy." It is entirely possible for a man to enter into

the natural interests of his children, but the necessary condition is an attitude of genuine respect for the child's personality and ideas, just as in the case of an adult. He must use the self-control he applies with his grown-up associates, and be content to learn what the youngsters are doing and thinking without proffering immediate correction. He must refrain from rejecting at once whatever seems strange to him. He needs to *listen*, to realize that his young informant, who has been giving much thought to the matter of which he speaks, may be right in his own way.

If he treats the child's mind with respect, making a real effort to see from the child's point of view, he will gain the confidence accorded a companion without losing his worth as a guide. In addition, he will learn much about matters which lie outside his own experience. Then the child discovers in Father a real companion and opens up to him. When the subject comes up again, Father will know more about it, will have new questions to ask, and the talk will be more intimate. A common interest has begun. Very likely Father will enjoy it as much as son or daughter. To be of a child's world for a while, to live his life and think his thoughts, is one of the greatest tonics for the sophisticated adult nature. It is a hunting and fishing trip for the spirit in the country of imagination, limited, eager and clean.

The Problem of Discipline.—What about discipline? Well, boys never run over a good scout-master. The untamed child is a sign that the parents have not sought companionship or have not known how to build it through study of communication. Of course, there must be limits to all freedom for children as well as business subordinates, and obedience to command. Three principles observed for ages by superior officers with soldiers or subordinates—as well as by those who train animals—apply in handling children. Do not, they say, undermine your own authority by indulgence through a good-natured impulse, or through yielding to teasing when you are tired. Never threaten; do not put yourself in a situation where you must either do more than is just

or seem to back down. And do not blow off your own irritation or nervousness, when you have to rebuke or punish, by scolding. Rather, instead, a swift, sharp rebuke or punishment when it is needed, given impersonally, and no more said. The child realizes that the law must be obeyed but that you are not "mad at him." If you lose control of yourself the child, like the business subordinate, is less likely to want to reform.

The one sure way of preventing mischief and naughty teasing is to let the youngsters feel that you are really interested in their affairs—not just amusing yourself with them when you happen to meet. Finding ways to assist, personally, in their projects is a flank attack on any impulse to be obstreperous.

Constructive Suggestions.—And constructive suggestions need not be neglected meanwhile. Sharing the natural interests of his children, Father can meet more fully the responsibility for "feeding in" other interests. Parents and teachers are too often engrossed in preparing a little "type" for "later life," while they neglect the living child. A child's mind is not empty, waiting passively to be poured full by parents and teachers—it is crammed with childish interests. To enter that world is to enter the child's heart. To join in his games, keep his secrets, help him with his special plans, is the surest way to giving him suggestions and the instruction he needs, and Father and Mother cannot safely forget that the largest share in a child's training for the contacts of life—certainly for command of "*speech*"—will always belong to the home. Opportunities for constructive suggestions present themselves everywhere. There is the *National Geographic Magazine* to lead to far fields and distant peoples, mountain and desert, the arctics and the tropics. Active young minds have an endless capacity for information about games and sports. The movies furnish by-paths leading to discussion of history, geography and science. Even their crude blunders can be turned to the family account. Children despise inaccuracy. For them, even the well-loved flights of imagination must rest upon accurate details where

they touch daily life or familiar things. There are children's books and magazines: *The American Boy*, *St. Nicholas*, the venerable but ever-young *Youth's Companion*, gateways to literature and to the problems of society in simple form. There are the puzzles that baffle even Father and Mother and require visits to the public library. There are problems of the classroom brought home by the elder children to be enriched by whatever the parents can contribute in the way of general information. The radio, the airplane, the automobile, open attractive roads to science. Finally there is the home library with its stores of "grown-up" books that a child may "discover" and be allowed to read, with the unfailing stimulus of a slight parental hesitation.

Father's Business.—Even Father's business or professional concerns provide interest for the children, if rightly presented. They have a right to know something of what he is doing in the hours away from home. Acquaintance with Father's business is the best introduction to business itself and to business standards of application, thoroughness, and responsibility. A frequent indictment against young people entering business life today is lack of a sense of personal responsibility. One wonders about the home, in these cases.

But Father must learn to tell of his own work in terms that the home folks can understand. He cannot talk as a specialist, for their background is not his. He has to step down his information, to resist all temptation to lecture. The lightness of touch here developed will be useful, also, even in the contacts of business.

General Topics.—If Father is to accompany the young minds in topics of a general nature, he will very likely have to brush up. In business a man sticks to his own field. At home a leap "from China to Peru" is nothing to Father. His knowledge need not be deep, detailed, or full of dry facts, but his perspective ought to be right.

And he must maintain an attitude of genuine interest in the

subject; he must be a fellow-learner. He will manage, for instance, to find a moment or so even in the business day, or in travel to and from the office, to look up, himself, some point in which the children are interested. Such a one will not hand down a hasty decision to young inquirers who ask "Why?" When the stray notions that chance to lie in Father's mind fail to satisfy the demands of active youth, he will plead ignorance in the matter and suggest a line of investigation that will satisfy all. On no account will he fling a reasonable case out of court with an "Oh, don't bother me!" Unchecked, children will ask questions idly much of the time. To encourage this is an injustice to the child, but to discourage idle questioning in such a manner as to stimulate habits of investigation and reflection, is a task worthy of the utmost parental ingenuity and patience.

The Art of Conversation—Home Training.—It is impossible to over-estimate the value of the informal schooling in proper behavior that may be imparted in the living-room and at the dining-table. There is the place for learning the technique and courtesies of social conversation. And Father must help show the youngsters how. It is mighty good drill for him. In the world of professional and business life there is no time for general discussion. Conversation there is a means to an end. We want no playfulness or posing; we want to get to the point. But in the family circle all sorts of topics come up for leisurely discussion. Father may preside, in a way, like the chairman of a committee, but the "members" are all free to have their say. And the children can learn in that informal conference to take their part easily—without presumption to marshal reasons for a view, to express and accept difference of opinion and feeling with moderation and good humor.

One of the nuisances of adult society is the man or woman who cannot participate in general discussion. Who has not suffered from the bore who sits mute as an oyster most of the time because he thinks he has nothing worth saying, only to burst

into a harangue when the talk veers round to his special interest? It is a fair guess that these persons came from family circles where the art of conversation had not been practiced. The free and unlimited talk of the family group provides a wholesome check upon undue egotism in any of its members, and encourages the impersonal attitude in a discussion. Another pest in adult life is the person who has to express his or her personal reaction to whatever subject comes up. A certain young man was lunching with two companions, one of them an engineer of wide experience. At a pause in the chat the older man casually remarked on the regularity of the circular disk of cream on the top of a cup of coffee the waiter had just poured for him. "Oh, Mr. X," broke in the young unfortunate, "I wish I had your powers of observation! Now I . . ." and so on and so on. That young man with his uneasy *ego* had missed the conversation discipline of a wide-awake family circle.

Training in Minor Points of Contact.—Home situations offer constant opportunity for training in minor points of communication technique, sometimes through direct counsel but more often through imitation of the way Father or Mother does it. Carrying a message with verbal accuracy and without misrepresenting the sender's attitude, is one of these. Giving orders to servants or casual helpers, is another. The courteous reception of visitors when the older members of the family are out of the room, or not at home, and carrying on general conversation with them without either silly shyness or forwardness, is still another.

The social use of the telephone is a special matter often neglected in the home. Social conversations on the telephone are naturally less crisp and concise than those of business hours. Within seemingly limits their objective is "visiting," rather than mere exchange of information. But moderation is essential. If the instrument is within hearing of the rest of the group, the outside call interrupts the affairs of the family. For one of the younger members to carry on a noisy marathon chat with a school

friend is not good manners. For either Father or Mother to lose track, similarly, of the waiting family circle, is not good training for the children. Ways of ending a telephone conversation, after a reasonable time has passed, without being rude to the speaker at the other end, are an element in home training that ought not to be neglected. And in the social use of the telephone, as in its business use, it is unpardonable not to observe the technique of address—clear announcement of who is speaking and courteous request for the person desired.

Responsibility for Mutual Entertainment.—One of the most important elements in satisfactory family intercourse is the development of a sense of responsibility for mutual entertainment. Home is not a work unit; it is primarily a pleasure unit. The members of the circle obtain their chief pleasure through contributing to the pleasure of the others. The home affords special occasion for two arts of communication, both of them highly valuable in the intercourse of society and both too much neglected in our swift and preoccupied modern life.

The Art of Telling a Story.—There is the art of telling a story, oldest of literary arts. Perhaps no single accomplishment counts so largely in making a person an interesting companion. The family circle gives endless opportunity for practice of this priceless art until the pleasant exercise becomes automatic and easy. A family where Father dramatizes in simple terms scenes from his business day, and Mother her news of the neighbors, and where the children, as they grow older, bring spirited versions of their own doings—all in brief, well-turned form—is about as stimulating a company as can be found. With such a family an evening at the movies is apt to be less attractive than their own conversation.

The Art of Reading Aloud.—The other art is that of reading aloud. There is no more stimulating indoor sport, with a good book and a good reader. Nothing equals it as a force in develop-

ing a sense of the beauty and power in expression, whether in speech or in writing.

Fortunately there are many homes where this domestic art is still regularly practiced, where old and young become acquainted in this leisurely and intimate way with the best new novels, plays, and stimulating essays, and with the old stand-bys—Dickens, Thackeray, Hugo, Hardy, Stevenson, and Kipling; Mark Twain, Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, Frank Stockton, Owen Wister, and the rest. In such a home, usually, Father began the practice when there was only one listener. Later there were others to listen in, and the range of readings broadened. Now, perhaps, through the lips of younger readers, Father and Mother still keep in touch with the newer fashions of thought and with a later age.

The man absorbed in affairs may say, "I do not need to study the art of talking. My communications of importance are in writing." But is that true? For the hours of private life, certainly in the contacts of the household, speech is all-important.

CHAPTER XIX

SOCIAL CONVERSATION

The Most Lasting of Pleasures.—The pleasure of companionship with family and friends is very largely a matter of conversation. How large a part business conversation plays in the relations of the working day and in club and association activities has been shown in earlier chapters. Social conversation—just easy, informal talk—plays no less a part in our personal and private hours. Measured by its relation to our most intimate life, this least formal type of human communication activity is probably the most important of all. It affords the most lasting pleasure known to man.

Social conversation is virtually a necessity for all of us, young and old, simple or wise. We do our work, pursuing ambitions and discharging responsibilities, with grim concentration, but when an hour of leisure comes we all like to take the harness off our minds and let them play. The random, give-and-take discussion of trifles of the moment is a sort of safety valve. It is significant that men and women of special vigor of mind, those who have done much, seen much, thought much, generally appreciate it most keenly.

The Sociable and the "Dumb."—Now while nearly everyone is able to enjoy this pleasure some of the time, certain fortunate souls seem to enjoy it anywhere, with anybody. One meets people now and then who seem able to open conversation with anyone, always to learn something of interest. There are even those who do not have to make the first move, whom strangers constantly approach and entrust with confidences, as there are those to whom

any dog will come. What is their secret? Is it some sign of mental alertness, some unconscious indication of sympathy?

There are others, unfortunately, who rarely taste the pleasures of conversation. They sit in a company without taking part in the talk that goes about. When they travel no one speaks to them. Even at home, in many instances, they are still "dumb." Excellent people, often, efficient and reliable in what they have to do; only they cannot converse. Perhaps they have lost the touch, perhaps they never had it. They miss a great deal out of life.

Sometimes such a condition comes from a sort of mental arrogance or snobbishness. Among those who answered the questionnaire on the Place of English already mentioned,¹ were several unhappy "intellectuals" who complained of the small pleasure they found in conversation, because the persons with whom they had to associate could talk only of trifling matters unworthy the attention of thoughtful beings. Often, however, the victim of this condition is not at all arrogant or snobbish. There was the head of a thriving store in a big western town, a kindly and well-intentioned man, active in town and club affairs, a leading citizen. Yet, though he had most emphatically put his store on the map, he had not put himself there. While his partners were "Jim" and "Frank" to half the people of the town, he was always "Mr. Jones."

Neglect of Sociability—Its Result.—In the hurrying, tense life of today, a man who has his way to make is in real danger of getting out of touch with other people and actually losing the power to converse. It is a loss that is as fatal as, in the fairy tale, the loss of one's memory. Concentration upon professional or business activities or upon private study often checks a man's impulse to conversation and actually dries up his powers. He feels too "busy" to stop to talk. Instead of mixing in the chat that is going round he will hold back to study the paper, or to

¹ Chapter I.

think out some problem of his business. After he has been doing this for some years, he no longer has the ready impulse to open a conversation. And his attitude shows in his manner and look, so that other people recognize the "Not at home" sign and leave him alone. Then comes a time when he no longer has to work so hard. The pressure is easier. He comes to feel the need of intercourse with other people. But now his conversational joints are stiff; he has lost the power of opening a chat with others and in many cases the power even of responding. Many an active man in the later thirties is in just this unfortunate situation. When this "dumbness" pursues him even into his home, as happens in a good many instances, the man's state is to be pitied—to say nothing of his family's. In the Place of English investigation no question was asked about conversation in the family. From the tenor of many of the reports, however, it seems clear that if such a question had been listed the number reporting difficulty in ordinary talk with family and intimates would also have been surprisingly large.

Is Improvement Possible?—What is the secret of good social conversation? In the first place, can such conversation be made the subject of deliberate improvement at all? We think of it always as play, relaxation from the work of life; can this be studied, or will the effort kill the pleasure by destroying spontaneity? The answer is the same as with any other game. It is possible to remove awkwardness and in general strengthen your play without losing spontaneity and fun any more than when you master the strokes of golf or tennis or baseball. We hate the idea of standardization applied to play, but better control of our powers through mastery of the game's technique always intensifies the pleasure.

The "Great Conversationalists."—Only, in seeking to improve our conversation we need to have clearly in mind what we are after. The advice we sometimes receive is misleading. Most

of what has been written in English explicitly discussing conversation has to do with what are called "great conversationalists"—Dr. Samuel Johnson, Coleridge, Lord Macaulay, Thomas Carlyle—and in our own day Mr. Chesterton and Professor Brander Matthews. Very likely, when "good conversation" is referred to, the picture called up in many minds is that of some circle of which a Doctor Johnson or a Samuel Taylor Coleridge is the center. Probably every one now and then finds himself in such a group, the central figure of which is some person of brilliant attainments who is engaged upon a remarkable piece of work, or who has just returned from an exciting experience, and who dominates the talk while the rest gladly sit and listen.

But this is not at all the sort of activity we are here considering. The Coleridges and their type are soloists, parlor or dinner-table lecturers. To listen to their brilliant harangues is an exhilaration, but there is nothing of the give and take, on a basis of equality, which is the essential mark of conversation.

The Field Day of a Brilliant Group.—Or the picture called up by the term "good conversation" may be that of the brilliant fireworks display of a company of exceptional persons. Sometimes in such a group the conversation is as fast and furious as championship tennis. We have record of some talk of this kind that went on in the Boston of two generations ago, in the circle of Oliver Wendell Holmes, James Russell Lowell, Longfellow, Emerson, and their friends. You can get an idea of its range of topics and charm of manner in Dr. Holmes' "Autocrat of the Breakfast Table," and the sequels, "The Professor at the Breakfast Table," and "The Poet at the Breakfast Table." These books, by the way, are full of the wisdom of a wide knowledge of life. Dr. Holmes was himself a remarkably good talker in every way, and his books have much to say about this very matter of the art of conversation.

How brilliant and skilful the talk of that circle was may be seen in the following passage from the "Reminiscences" of Edwin

Percy Whipple, a member of the circle, published a few years ago. Whipple describes a conversation in which Holmes, Lowell, and the historian Motley were the speakers :

Motley laid down some proposition, which Holmes, of course, instantly doubted, and then Lowell plunged in, differing both from Motley and Holmes. A triangular duel ensued, with an occasional ringing sentence thrown in by Judge Hoar. In ordinary discussion one person is allowed to talk at least for a half or a quarter of a minute before his brother athletes rush in upon him with their replies; but in this debate all three talked at once, with a velocity of tongue which fully matched their velocity of thought. Still, in the incessant din of voices, every point made by one was replied to by another or ridiculed by a third, and was instantly followed by new statements, counter-statements, arguments and counter-arguments, hits and retorts, all germane to the matter and all directed to a definite end. The curiosity of the contest was that neither of the combatants repeated anything that had once been thrown out of the controversy as irrelevant, and that while speaking all together, the course of the discussion was as clear to the mind, as though there had been a minute's pause between statement and reply. The discussion was finished in fifteen minutes; if conducted under the ordinary rules of conversation, it would have lasted a couple of hours.

Exhilarating But Exceptional.—This undoubtedly was true conversation, with the essential qualities of give and take, equality of attitude, ease, fragmentariness, and courtesy. When John Burroughs, Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, and Harvey Firestone were on their camping trips, the newspapers used to give us, now and then, scraps of the talk of these four that had flashes of the same liveliness and fancy. There was plenty of such brilliant conversation in the group that gathered a generation ago in the Lambs Club in New York, reported by Augustus Thomas in his "Recollections." Or in Congress in the days of Tom Reed of Maine, Champ Clark, and Uncle Joe Cannon. Or in Edinburgh a hundred years ago, in the group that included Professor John Wilson, Thomas DeQuincey, James Hogg, the Scottish shepherd-poet who wrote "Kilmeny," and the other keen-witted journalists who wrote and edited those brilliant periodicals of the early nine-

teenth century—the *Edinburgh Review*, and *Blackwood's Magazine*.

Many of us, no doubt, participate once in a while in a conversational spree of this general type, though the play is not often quite so fast and intricate. It is a highly stimulating experience. But it is a most unusual experience for any one—the session of the “Cambridge Wits” reported by Whipple was exceptional even for those exceptional men. And it presupposes not only a group of well-informed and nimble minds but intimate acquaintance, so that each can catch on the wing the thought, feeling, or fancy of any of the others. Especially the fancy. In such talk “fancy” is the chief element; if *one* person takes the sprightly game too seriously, it stops.

The Conversation of Ordinary Men in Ordinary Moods.—

Manifestly, such exceptional talk cannot be the usual stuff and substance of conversation. “Life,” as Woodrow Wilson remarked, “is not all running to a fire.” What about the conversation of ordinary men in their ordinary moods? Does that require and reward study? Is improvement within the power of anyone of good intelligence who will approach it in the right way?

Not much connected discussion of the everyday conversation of ordinary people is to be found in books. One of the best treatments is a little book entitled “Conversation” by a brilliant Irishman of the last generation, J. P. Mahaffy.² Two recent works, full of suggestion, are “Talking,” by an ingenious young Englishman, Joseph B. Priestley,³ and “An Essay on Conversation,” by Henry W. Taft.⁴ Miss Agnes Repplier has a keen and sagacious essay on “The Luxury of Conversations,” in her volume entitled “Compromises.”⁵ A useful compilation by Grenville Kleiser, “Talk and Talkers,”⁶ brings together many things that have

² J. P. Mahaffy, *Conversation*, Penn Publishing Co.

³ Joseph B. Priestley, *Talking*, Harper & Brothers.

⁴ Henry W. Taft, *An Essay on Conversation*, The Macmillan Co.

⁵ Agnes Repplier, *Compromises*, Houghton, Mifflin Co.

⁶ Grenville Kleiser, *Talk and Talkers*, Funk & Wagnalls Co.

been said about conversation in various ages and countries. When once you have begun to search, you will find a rich store of casual comment and suggestion in the pages of biographies and journals and in the leisurely novels of Thackeray, George Eliot, Anthony Trollope, William Black, and others of the middle nineteenth century.

Our Own Conversation—Three Types of Occasions.—But all of us are daily engaged in conversation in various situations. Why not classify our own conversational contacts and see what they show? Suppose we group the occasions of social conversation, as we experience them, in three types—with family and intimates, with acquaintances, with strangers whom we meet casually, and note the characteristics of the three types.

With Strangers.—With strangers, it is a case of establishing contact, feeling round for mutual interests, discovering a new personality. As a rule such talk does not go very deep. People are apt to keep to stock topics, to speak impersonally and objectively. You can use your old jokes and stories, and have the pleasure of getting the reaction of strangers to the conversational repertoire which has lost its edge for acquaintances.

[And there is always the chance of striking some unexpected vein, catching glimpses into unknown worlds. It is a fascinating sport, this of tapping a stray stranger and learning something of what lies behind the face.] A distinguished newspaper man who makes a point of such contacts says he learns something from every individual he meets; everyone has some item or other to contribute after the journalist's deft "opening" has got the stranger started. Incidentally, he confesses to a defeat by another artist in the same line. Years ago he met a pleasant stranger on a coasting steamer, whom he tried in every way to "open up," but without avail. The other man talked pleasantly about anything the newspaper man started but volunteered nothing as to his own affairs. When they parted they exchanged cards, and

the newspaper man found that he had been consorting with Augustus Thomas. The one topic he had not thought of starting was the theatre; that had seemed utterly remote from the genial stranger.

Of course it is necessary to have standard "opener" topics: The weather; sport—in America of course it is baseball; business in its general aspects; and politics. The rambling miscellaneous brag-talk in the oldtime Pullman smoking compartment or round a hotel lounging-room was largely a playing for position, in which all these stock topics were utilized, until somebody struck fire and a real exchange of ideas began. Women, of course, have a different set of "openers." They are apt, by the way, to disapprove the masculine free-and-easy treatment of politics in this connection. To women, politics is apt to be very serious, when they take interest in it at all. But the man's attitude toward politics is only that of the old soldier toward the officer whom he serves with grumbling loyalty, or the Sicilian toward his family saint.

With Casual Acquaintances.—In the talk with acquaintances you meet occasionally it is chiefly a matter of picking up the threads of earlier meetings, going deeper, exploring character. Such talk is apt to be subjective and personal, to run to confidences and self-revelation. You are past the barriers of strangeness, and yet what you say to each other is not to be subjected to the relentless check-up of daily association, so that you can let yourself go. Often there is excellent thoughtful discussion of debatable matter which you avoid alike with strangers and with intimates. This is in one sense, probably, the best kind of talk—considered *merely* as talk. It is apt to be the most lively and entertaining. It would show best, if written down. Talk with strangers has so much of the perfunctory, and talk with intimates so much between the lines, that neither of these appears well when reduced to writing. But with occasional acquaintances you open up and talk freely, and yet you strive always to be entertaining.

With Family and Intimates.—The talk with family and intimates is generally less spectacular, quieter, more impersonal in subject-matter. With our own people we are past the exploring and revealing stage for most subjects. The pleasure comes from watching the reaction of persons whose ways we know to new topics and situations, in the casual running exchange of comment on the trifles shared in common.

In a certain Childs' lunchroom in downtown New York, some years ago, one of the sights was a group of four friends who used to meet daily at noon, usually at a table in the center of the room, and linger quietly chatting till about 1:30. They came separately and often departed separately. There were two men of thirty-five or so, one in his twenties, and an Englishman of fifty. They seemed to talk about sport, politics, the current matters of the day's news, manifestly not about business. The talk was sometimes animated, but never excited and generally quiet and leisurely. Sometimes they just sat and said little. Occasionally one would glance over a paper, reading out a sentence here and there, and the others would make brief comments. Similar groups may be seen on commuter trains or in a club lounge; in a small town you find them in certain stores, or in a barber-shop.

In such a group one gets conversation of a peculiar intimacy and interest. It is a sort of intimate, informal club. The members enjoy thinking along together. Each knows just where to touch up the others so as to get a response, and how far it is safe to go. Each knows the dead-spots, the topics to be avoided by common consent—perhaps old battlefields.

Conversation at Its Best.—Conversation with family and intimate friends is somewhat in danger of becoming a little too informal, too laconic. Sometimes we take our own folks too much for granted. At its best, however, this is the acme of conversation, carrying the fullest meaning with least effort. Here the power of voice and physical expression comes especially into play.

Such conversation is found in its fullest degree, perhaps, between husband and wife. At a dinner, lecture, or play you will often see a man and his wife glance at each other and smile slightly at some remark or happening. That smile, a swift comparing of notes, is the essence of conversation with intimates. Both are familiar with the background; the single glance is all that is needed to flash an idea from one to the other.

“Conversation” Without Words—Tennyson and Carlyle.—

There is an anecdote somewhere of Tennyson and Carlyle—both of them great talkers—passing a long evening together in Carlyle’s London house with great satisfaction, hardly exchanging a word. When Tennyson entered, the story goes, he found Carlyle seated in a great arm-chair before the fire, smoking a churchwarden pipe. Without rising, Carlyle waved to another chair, and then to the mantel, where was a jar of tobacco and a package of the long clay pipes. Tennyson bowed, filled and lighted a pipe, drew up the chair, and stretched out. Presently Carlyle’s pipe was smoked out. He flung it into the grate, filled and lighted a fresh one, and resumed his seat. Then Tennyson’s pipe was finished, and he in turn threw the old pipe into the grate, lighted another, and sat down. So it went on, till the package of pipes was used up. Then Tennyson rose to go, and Carlyle got up, grasped his hand, and expressed in eager tones his delight in the evening of perfect companionship.

Now social conversation, in all three types, differs from all other forms of communication considered in this book in that one’s chief function is to “receive” rather than to “give.” You engage in such conversation chiefly to learn what the other has to tell *you*. At least, it is a joint adventure, pooling your wits in following whatever game is started. Brown, Jones, and Robinson each contributes to drive the ball along. To think of social conversation as an opportunity for yourself to talk, is to miss its meaning entirely. Hence the manuals and articles we sometimes meet—“How to Become a Good Conversationalist”—are all

wrong. A "conversationalist," indeed, one who looks upon conversation as an opportunity to show off, is very nearly a monstrosity.

Social conversation has no ulterior object; it is an end in itself. It is not primarily a search for excitement, nor yet a quest for information. It is not mere swapping of news, or even, swapping of "views," but a cooperative consideration of a topic, an exploration in which both parties share, collaborating in building up a structure of thought. As an informal quiet game with a "low limit," it is an invaluable rest and tonic for the busy man or woman.

Rest for the Mind.—For such easy conversation is not in the least, as the actively busy man may be tempted to consider it, a waste of time. It is a better rest for him than the theatre, the movies, or the radio. In all these he remains a spectator; his rôle is passive. But in conversation he is obtaining constant exercise—gentle or active as occasion brings—which is better rest than mere passivity. Further, this easy exercise is among the most helpful of mental disciplines. It gives poise and readiness. "Conversation," Lord Bacon said, "maketh a ready man." It is social conversation particularly which develops alertness and nimbleness of mind, the skill in verbal fencing that is everywhere an asset, and sureness of adjustment to other persons.

The adjustments of business life, or even of club activities, have almost always a degree of tenseness and effort; there is always something at stake, which stimulates you to all which you do. This is another reason why many a successful man in the "thirties," who is an effective performer in business, is a dull fellow out of business hours and among his intimates. His mind does not function without the stimulant of profit, or of duty. With all work and no play Jack is bound to become rather a dull boy, whoever he is, and however lively he was when he started.

The Mind Not Enslaved by the Job.—Social conversation breaks up the tenseness of extreme concentration upon one's own

job. You are exercised in giving attention to other people's interests, distant though they may be from your own, without attempting to direct them to any ulterior object of either profit or duty. You are exercised, also, in presenting your own ideas merely to entertain your companion. After all, our minds were given us for enjoyment, not altogether, perhaps not mainly, for labor.

It is often alleged, by those acquainted with older nations, that good conversation is rare in America. In an entertaining article in *Harper's Magazine* a year or so ago, on "The Decline of Conversation," Albert J. Nock relates the following story:

Mr. Finkman turned up at the store one Monday morning, full of delight at the wonderful time he had had at his partner's house the evening before—excellent company, interesting conversation, a supreme occasion in every respect. After dinner, he said—and such a dinner!—"we go in the parlor and all the evening until midnight we sit and talk it business."

Now this is a large and populous land and those who make that charge have not always a broad enough knowledge of American life to generalize safely. Downtown New York and Chicago, Pullmans and club parlors are not all of the United States. It is only too easy to overlook the differences of occasion and relationship in different countries. So far as there is truth in the charge against American conversation, the explanation is probably to be found in the tense concentration already noted, the result of the swifter pace of this most modern of lands.

Make Time for Talk.—It may be remarked, by the way, that the businesslike budgeting of one's time is not the invention of twentieth century America. The daily program sketched a generation ago by an English novelist, Arnold Bennett, in his businesslike little treatise on "How to Live on Twenty-Four Hours a Day," was little conducive to leisurely conversation. It may be surmised that one Julius Caesar, nearly twenty centuries earlier, who dictated to three stenographers at once and wrote his dis-

patches and his memoirs on the march, had none too much time for leisurely conversation. And a notable example of the alleged "American" attitude toward conversation is found in an eighteenth century Englishman, John Wesley, founder of Methodism and one of the busiest men, probably, that the world has seen. Dr. Samuel Johnson said of him: "John Wesley's conversation is good. But he must always go at a certain time. This is very unpleasant to a man who likes to fold his legs and have his talk out, as I do."

Talking shop, outside of shop time, is not real conversation and brings no mental refreshment. Moreover, the unfortunate, dry-minded fellow who cannot get his thought off his business or specialty and become interested in the scenery through which the talk passes, is not *persona grata* in general conversation, where the talkers lie back, like big fish in a stream, and wait for the game that floats down.

Furthermore, as suggested in Chapter IV, without some of this power of easy interest in topics outside of business, one does not fully meet the requirements even of professional or business relations. In some phases of business intercourse the urbanity of purely social conversation is a large element. When you go out to dinner with a "customer," you need to be able to talk of matters outside business with real interest. When a negotiation is completed, to be able to drop business, and pass easily into unforced and appropriate social conversation that closes the interview pleasantly, is a valuable accomplishment.

How to Improve.—In any deliberate effort for improvement in social conversation, a first maxim might be: Learn to listen. Many persons are apt to begin at the wrong end. In the desire to make their talk interesting they are tempted to show off, to "lecture." That may easily lead to what in old-time college slang used to be called "drooling," may make you a bore without your realizing the fact. For if you try too hard to shine you are almost certain to talk, much of the time, about matters in which

your listeners are not interested. It is the taste of the fish, as Macaulay said, that should govern one's choice of bait.

[And listening is more fun. It is not necessary to lead the singing in order to enjoy the music. In social conversation the catcher's position is more enjoyable than the pitcher's. For beyond question there are more fresh and suggestive ideas in the minds of other people—taken collectively—than in one's own, and if you keep in the background and coax others to talk you gain all they have to bestow.]

Moreover, the talk that is richest in interesting reactions and ideas is not, after all, that of the brilliant "lions" or "lecturers," the Macaulays and Coleridges and Chestertons. They are, much of the time, too busy and too much excited. Their talk is active and showy, but often lacks in savor. It is in the remarks of the non-talkers, rather, even of persons often reputed dull that savor is found, the product of their private observation of life—when it can be coaxed out. Such conversation cannot be forced. It distills. The way you listen is all-important.

Listen Actively.—The listening that is to catch and get full value from these fresh thoughts of shy people should be not passive, but active; not only courteous but seriously attentive. The art of drawing out, used continually in the talk of business and club life, is almost the foundation of success in social conversation. [Practice at bending your mind to the other's thought, even though at first his thought may seem trivial, develops in you the power of making real for yourself the pictures in the other man's mind that lie behind what may be clumsy statements. You perceive what he is thinking and feeling, inside his shell.]

A second maxim might be: Send the ball back. Make some comment always on what the other says. Many people forget that success in the conversational game involves playing up to your partner. Much of the time, in ordinary conversation, they just listen and say nothing until something is said that happens to touch upon their special interests. That is to put an unfair

burden on the other person—you make him chase his own balls. Even if you can only ask minor questions with a friendly manner and some evidence of attention, you please the other person, and he is apt to remember you kindly. Women have known this secret for ages.

But if you listen actively you can nearly always do more than this. Your knowledge of life in general, if you are really trying to think the other's thoughts along with him, almost invariably prompts some comment or question which gets under the surface with your companion. He is prompted to open up more readily; his new move calls out another remark from you; and before you know it you find yourself actively contributing to the conversation.

In a certain American city there is a well-known musician, an Englishman by birth, who is as consummate an artist in conversation as in the interpretation of a song. The son of a professor at Oxford, his education was unusually wide and thorough, and he has lived in many lands and with people of many kinds. He will rarely start a topic for himself, but whatever topic you enter upon he will take up, with fresh and sympathetic interest and contribute something of his own. His comments upon what you have to say, and his interested questions throw fresh light upon your own special themes. You invariably talk better, yourself, when you talk with *him*.

William Roscoe Thayer, known for his life of Cavour and other writings on Italy, was also known as an agreeable, entertaining companion, a social asset to any community in which he tarried or resided. In a letter to a friend he gives an inventory of his own characteristics which he meant should be taken humorously. In reality, it would be difficult better to enumerate his qualities:

A good mixer; very discreet; speaks his mother tongue and several languages; has travelled extensively; has the chameleon's faculty of taking the color of the opinion of those round him; bristles with anecdotes; a judicious provider of chestnuts and *marrons glacés*, which he

has collected on three continents; possesses a keen sense of humor, which he discreetly veils from those who have none; *excels as a listener*—the highest quality in a conversationalist; equally good at head-to-heads, square parties and breakfast banquets.

Taking Your Part.—Do not hold back, contribute. In public speaking the motto for a sensible man is: Do not make a speech unless you are sure you have something to say. The motto in business conversation is: Say no more than will gain your business objective. But in social conversation, you are expected to take your time, to ramble, and wander down by-paths.

Therefore, contribute freely. Express your reaction to what your companions say. As in a game of dominoes, *match on* to what has been said. Your own reflections, distilled by experience, are always interesting to other men when you can open up and make them intelligible.

A good conversation speech will often include three steps or moves. First, you express acquiescence in what your companion has said—or surprise—or disagreement. Second, you present some similar experience of your own, or some reflection upon the point the other man has made. Third, you ask a question designed to call out more of the first speaker's attitude, or to induce him to comment upon what you have just added.

Some "Don'ts."—But your contributions need not and should not be lengthy. Never a solo. A man of long and eventful life in the diplomatic service once jotted down for a young friend a few maxims for conversation, as follows:

Don't try to take all the tricks. When a subject is started, make a reply; comment on what the other person has said; it is impolite not to do this. But, most of the time, let the others win the glory. You will be better liked, and people will come back to reveal their own thought and ask for yours, if you don't try to dominate the conversation.

Don't ride your hobby in public. Keep in the background your own exploits, your business questions and particularly your personal troubles and physical ailments.

Don't continue on a point when the other person desires to drop it. Follow his lead.

Don't make long individual speeches. Stop, and invite reply. Otherwise you are in danger of boring or offending the others. Though they may give no sign of displeasure they are likely to avoid you in the future.

To these "don'ts" of the veteran diplomat may be added another, which is found in an ingenious little book on conversation written for women by Miss Gwendolyn Stimpson:⁷

Don't try to show your quickness of perception and mind by assuming you know just what your escort is going to say before he has finished the sentence, and say it for him; in nine cases out of ten you will say something entirely different from what he was going to say. Some people think it is clever and bright to finish another person's idea for them—it may show rapidity of brain, but it is not polite and interrupts the sequence of thought. It is as much as saying, "My dear friend, you are making a mess of that sentence; let me finish it for you."

That advice applies equally to women and to men.

The Perils of Gushing.—We smile at the gushing confidences of schoolgirls or college lads. Yet those of older years may slip unawares into the same error. Now and then, in the club car or on a steamer, we meet a congenial stranger who, like ourself, has nothing to do, for the time, but talk. The acquaintance ripens fast, and before either party realizes it we are launched on a conversational marathon. We talk for hours, perhaps, running the gamut of sport, travel, public affairs, business, and intimate family confidences. We stop at last, talked out and a little ashamed, and a pall of silence follows. We have told each other everything we know, and instinctively we avoid each other thereafter.

A Seasoned Restraint.—Compare the way such an acquaintance was handled by two old travellers who were introduced by a mutual friend in a Chicago station, as they boarded the train for

⁷ E. Gwendolyn Stimpson, *Conversation and a Magnetic Personality*, The Elizabeth Towne Co., Holyoke, Mass.

New York. The two men, both professional writers, had many tastes and many friends in common. But they knew the dangers of talking too long. So they chatted awhile and separated; met later for another chat; had breakfast together next morning as the train pulled in, and parted with interest and respect still fresh.

How many steamer companionships spring up, flourish for a day or two, and die when the vessel docks! It is better not to go too far, to keep always something in the cupboard for the next meal. Particularly is it wise not to allow ourselves to come too soon to the close quarters of personal tastes and convictions, with each "new-hatched, unlicked comrade," to use the words of Polonius in "Hamlet."

Cooperation.—A final maxim might be: Cultivate deftness in the swift, brief touches that serve to start the others talking, and to save the company from idle chatter. Be alert to utilize, for this purpose, the arts of formulation and delivery. There has to be some attention, however slight, to guiding the talk, keeping it on a certain topic or in a certain key long enough to give pleasure, and then veering off to something else. Mere passive waiting for the spirit to move is likely to result in spasmodic alternation of blank silences with periods of wild volubility. Said a forty-year-old engineer of Chicago, in his reply to the questionnaire already mentioned, "I am often dumb in conversation; sometimes voluble and boring."

When all hands are skilled, they cooperate in the guiding almost unconsciously—like soldiers "keeping touch" on dress parade. In such instinctive "guiding" no one of you is thinking of "working out a discussion," or realizes, perhaps, until afterward the general pattern which the conversation develops. You are thinking merely of meeting and handling, courteously and economically, each immediate situation. The technique developed at office and club may be applied here also, not now to push toward an ulterior purpose, but merely to enable yourself and your friends

to realize all the pleasure possible from the occasion. The development of such sensitiveness and almost automatic power of *steering*—as in dancing, skating, canoeing—is one of the best rewards from the study of conversation.

The Best Age for Conversation.—To enjoy conversation, and to give pleasure to others, neither active participation in life nor youth is an essential, any more than personal distinction or personal beauty. The right attitude is the one essential; supple sureness of technique develops gradually with time and practice. Yet the best conversation, perhaps, is found among persons of later middle life.

Conversation gratifies, first, the craving for sympathy, through enabling us to reveal to others our thoughts, feelings, and fancies, and obtain some comment. It gratifies also the craving to look into other lives, to discover the impulses, large and small, that flit across the minds of others, as across our own, and move them this way and that; thus in some degree we live their lives for the time being.

Now with young people the first craving is much the stronger. They are full of eager emotion. Their talk is chiefly of their plans, dreams, and new convictions, colored often with the harmless youthful cynicism which is the accompaniment of dreams. As one grows older, and feels the burden of routine and responsibility, the second craving comes to the fore. One seeks the relief of getting away, for a time, from one's own personality.

Very young people, therefore, lacking interest in others, and not yet having experienced the thousand delicate adjustments to circumstances which life brings, do not usually converse well. They can prattle pleasingly, but their conversation lacks meaning—just as young people, it has been said, have no sense of humor though they may be merry. Here is one compensation for the flight of time. Life means more to you, and when you tell of it your talk has richness and charm.

Very old people, on the other hand, are apt to have closed

their minds to the current world. Their talk, too often, is nothing but narrative of former experiences, which to others seems only prosy because the old man cannot give the background for his remarks. Of course, when you find an old man or woman who has retained freshness of interest in life, and something of the streak of *wonder* which we associate with youth, you get excellent conversation.

Generally, however, the best conversation is among persons of middle life, men and women who are in the current of affairs but who are interested in comparing views, and in giving their minds exercises with their peers.

The saying that "Two's company, three's a crowd" is true of love-making but not of conversation. The best conversation develops, usually, among three, four, or five. "Two-somes" are prone to gushing confidences, or debate, or bald exchange of facts. With three or more, each one is more apt to remember the rights and limitations of the listeners.

An Art of Common Life.—In a little foreign restaurant on New York's West Side two American visitors chanced to be seated near a party of French people, old and young—evidently several families gathered for some anniversary. They were plain working people, but their conversation was lively, original, and skilful. The belle of the occasion was a woman sixty-five years old or so. She was very stout, she could never have been pretty, but she knew how to talk. Her voice was pleasant, what she had to say was clever and original, but what held attention was the way she managed to draw all the others into the talk, keeping the whole party in the game. That was good conversation—it is a pity that we do not have more like it.

Any Topic You Like.—As to the proper topics of conversation, the field is as wide and varied as human nature. There is no need to try for depth or intrinsic seriousness. That has little to do with the quality of the talk. Conversation at its best is a sort of swift comment upon the facts of life, not a mere review

but a contemplation, and it is possible "greatly to find comment in a straw."

On the other hand, there is no need to avoid seriousness of theme. The speaker may plunge as deep as he likes, if his thought grows out of the course of the discussion—if the dominoes have been matched. Only, he will not stay down, or stay up, too long at a time. His remarks should be serious and accurate enough for the conditions of the occasion. What is needed is lightness of touch without flippancy, seriousness without solemn heaviness. And "in the very torrent, tempest, whirlwind of passion," always the "temperance that will give it smoothness."

The Stream of Conversation.—Sometimes it is said that American talk tends too much to concentrate upon persons and concrete facts. This is not necessarily a defect. For the proper subject-matter of conversation is the web of life, as the great film unrolls before you, and life is concrete. It is wise to cultivate attention to the objective aspects of the items considered, the ideas and relationships involved. But talk is best couched in terms of things and persons. Conversation about abstractions, largely a pose, is rarely enjoyed by normal persons. The pleasure from conversation comes chiefly from easy but intelligent, graceful discussion of "little things," translating and interpreting the life of every day. That is why it is the most lasting of all human pleasures, for the stream of life never runs dry.

When you do converse, whatever the subject,—open up. Speak frankly, so far as you speak at all. Revealing your genuine feeling, conviction, fancy, wins attention and brings response, and that in turn gives you another opening and so the game goes on. Thus you will learn, for yourself, that this oldest and least formal type of communication—social conversation—is the most interesting, most worth while, most potent of all. In the quaint phrase of the old hymn, it makes possible

"The fellowship of kindred minds,
Most like to that above."

CHAPTER XX

TELLING A STORY

The Oldest of Literary Arts.—One aspect of social conversation calls for special notice—telling a story. Wherever you find a group chatting together—workmen at their lunch hour, bankers in a private car, women in an afternoon sewing group—most of the talk is narrative. In large degree it consists of personal experiences. There is something about the orderly flow of incident arranged in time-sequence—which is what a story amounts to—that stirs and retains interest.

Telling a story is an important element also in public speaking. In the same way as "A jest may find him who a sermon flies," so the account of an incident will often catch and focus the attention of an audience, transforming them from a collection of individuals each busy with his own thoughts, to a company all following the speaker's thought.

It is instinctive for us to grasp a matter easily when it is put into narrative sequence—even a business report, or a critical summary of a social movement. Often when these chronological impressions have been laboriously translated into abstract terms, as the speaker is continually tempted to do, the presentation is less intelligible and really less accurate as a report than in the simple narrative order.

Use of Stories in Public Address.—The supreme example of the use of stories in public address is that of the Parables in the New Testament. A noteworthy modern application of a similar mode of presentation was made by Dr. Russell A. Conwell of Philadelphia, founder of Temple University. His lecture entitled "Acres of Diamonds," a stimulus to energy and initiative for

millions of persons, consisted of one-fourth text and three-fourths examples and stories. He used to change the individual stories from time to time, but he had the exceptional wisdom to hold down to a minimum theory and explanation, and let his stories carry the message.

Recently a number of students from an engineering college were taken to New York to visit stores and offices, and at the close of a day of sight-seeing were shepherded into the Engineers' Club for dinner and a final address on Management from a distinguished engineer. The man who was to address them, perceiving that the young men were tired and sleepy from their day of new sensations, put aside the formal paper he had prepared, and, as he modestly reported later to a friend, just "told them a string of stories." These the youngsters could follow without effort, and they forgot their weariness in the easy, good-humored flow of the engineer's talk. Back in the classroom some days later, an instructor who had accompanied their group explained to the young men what the engineer had done. Actually, in the course of his dozen stories, he had sketched, illustrated, and enforced for them the principles of Management more pointedly, perhaps, than could have been done in a formal lecture.

In Imaginative Literature.—Aside from its use in public speaking, however, story-telling, conversational narrative, has been the delight of men, women, and children of every race—white, black, red, brown, and yellow—and in all ages of the world. It is the oldest of literary arts. Moreover, it is such material that constitutes the bulk of the great works of literature of the past. The great national epics of earlier ages—the Iliad and Odyssey of the Greeks—the Aeneid of the Romans—Beowulf, the old English epic—the Nibelungen Lied of the Germans, and many others—and the novels and tales of later centuries from Don Quixote down through Defoe, Fielding, Scott, Dickens, Dumas, Hugo, Tolstoy, to Kipling, Dostoyevsky, and Wells—each one is a collection of accounts of episodes from common life. With all their

embellishment of comment, of reflection, and of description, the essential substance of these great literary works is just such accounts of adventure, or such cleverly framed little pictures of amusing or surprising episodes as we exchange with our friends in the course of informal chat.

In Conversation.—The same principles govern alike in the stories of conversation, and in the stories that have been repeated and written down and now are called literature. The basic model, indeed, is the simple man-to-man narrative. Even that simple narrative has a more or less definite technique of arrangement, coloring and delivery. The hours of toil of the novelist are given largely to the effort of reproducing as nearly as possible, under the elaborate conditions of writing and print, the effect of a man telling a story in talk.

If a man wishes to enjoy conversation to the fullest, as well as to do his part toward making it interesting for others, study of the art of story-telling is a most profitable investment of time and thought. It will be continually useful in social life. It will also be useful on many occasions in professional or business life—when a customer or associate must be entertained; when a group of associates is waiting for another member before beginning a meeting. Such study and experimentation also provides a key that will aid in understanding and enjoying the written stories of the world's great books.

The Elements of Narrative.—In all story-telling, whether in books or in conversation, the interest lies in the account of *action*: how one condition of affairs changed into another. The action is interesting in proportion as it is felt to be either unusual and surprising, or significant and important.

Of greatest use in bringing out for listener or reader these qualities of the action are: the events themselves; the characters—the nature of the personages concerned; and the setting or background.

All good stories secure the reader's interest by skilful manipulation of these three features.

Conditions of Conversational Story-Telling.—When using narrative in conversation, allowance has to be made, in addition, for certain special conditions. You need:

First, to realize clearly just what you are trying to do in the particular case; what are the conditions of that occasion; what are your relations to the listeners.

Second, to know what sort of items are interesting to the group in which you are, and what language-dress will secure their full attention. This knowledge comes from experience rather than from any instruction.

Third, to have sufficient command of the auxiliaries of delivery—utterance, voice, and physical expression—to act out your story so far as seems desirable, and give it the power of dramatic suggestion.

But all this is well within the reach of anyone who is interested in observing people, and who is able to keep his own personality properly in the background.

The Temptation to Show Off.—This last point is most important. For the chief danger in telling a story comes from the feature which is its chief fascination. Telling a story, like making a speech, is a solo. For the time being you "have the floor." You challenge attention, interrupting the exchange of remarks which is the staple of conversation and saying in effect: "Keep still now and listen to me, for here is a bit of life which you'll be glad to know." There is an exhilaration in doing that, feeling the eyes of your companions fixed upon you as they follow the suggestions your remarks give them. There is always a pleasure in revealing to another mind the course of an action, "showing the road"—everyone enjoys doing that—stirring the listener's attention at the start, whetting his interest as the narrative proceeds, working to a climax, and ending with some deft turn or surprise that brings a laugh or exclamation.

The danger comes in the temptation to display your own cleverness, either through making yourself the hero of the piece, which is highly unwise, or through interpolating comments that divert attention from the incident you are reporting to yourself and your own wit or acuteness. The impulse to climb on the stage yourself is by all means to be restrained. There is even more exhilaration in being the skilful reporter of the doings of other people.

Requirements a Story Must Satisfy.—In Part III we have seen that when you take the floor for a speech you are expected to fulfil the promise of your challenge; the message you undertake to deliver must be worth while. If it is dull or trivial, or too lengthy, the audience will resent it, or go to sleep. So with a story. However informal the occasion, your narrative has to pass two tests. The first test is that of substance. It must have some point or central theme which those listeners will feel to be worth considering. There is a dead line, unexpressed but absolute, in everyone's mind, as to what is worth thinking about. If you go beyond this the listener will think that you are "queer," mentally not up to par, or else that you are "fooling" with him and "putting something over." The second test is that of form. The story must fit into the conversation situation of the moment. It must not be too intricate—must be readily intelligible to the individual or group addressed—and in arrangement, language, and delivery it must be adapted to the listener's mood.

Two Great Types of "Stories."—Telling a story may mean either of two things. It may mean repeating a formal anecdote which you have heard or read, or it may mean putting into narrative form an adventure or experience of your own or of someone else. According as your story falls into one or the other of these classifications, it illustrates one of two great types of narrative literature which have existed for ages: first, that of the "jest," "fable," or "tale"; second, that of the adventure story, epic or novel.

The Anecdote

It is the first type, probably, of which we chiefly think when we speak of telling a story. We vision a man enlivening an after-dinner speech or entertaining a group round a club fire with a new anecdote, cleverly and concisely built, expressed in trim, sparkling phrase, leading up deftly to a surprising or amusing point.

Humanity has always enjoyed such anecdotes. The number on record is astounding. As far back as history goes, among peoples of every race, we find records of these ingenious little tales illustrating the foibles and humors of existence. The world over, millions of groups have thrilled to their charm from the lips of the story-teller of village or camp, or of grandfather or grandmother at the family hearth. A familiar example is that of the "Fables of Aesop," which we read at school, a set of pictures of human life in terms of animals, written down in ancient Greece more than two thousand years ago, and probably circulated orally for ages before that. In the literature of ancient times, in Egypt, India, China, Persia, among the Greeks and Romans; in the European Middle Ages, are many volumes of such anecdotes. In recent times travelers among the tribes of Africa, the South Seas, and the far North, among the American Indians and the peasants of Europe and Asia, have collected thousands of similar anecdotes heard in their travels. The pleasure we take in a well-told anecdote at a public gathering is something that is deep in the traditions of the race.

Collecting Your Anecdotes.—It is only natural, as we listen and laugh and admire when someone tells such a story effectively, that we should say to ourselves, perhaps with a touch of envy, "I wish I could tell a story like that." Well, with a little care for the rules of the game—not difficult ones to follow—anyone can acquire this power, so far as the ordinary occasions of life are concerned.

First, of course, you need to find your stories, and fix them in mind. It may prove convenient to make a little collection, of the anecdotes which you personally enjoy and which you find others enjoy, and write them down in a small loose-leaf memo-book. Many persons who have to make public speeches frequently, or to "meet people"—as a traveling salesman does—set up some such list. Then before going out to lunch or dinner with friends you can look over the pages of your list and select one or two stories which you think may be appropriate. Only, one must be careful not to use the same anecdote twice with the same group.

Where will you get them? Out of the air! Many of the best will come from friends. It is just as well to avoid those from current newspapers or comic magazines, and from vaudeville programs—everyone else will know them. An hour or so spent looking over some old magazines in the public library, *Life*, *Judge* or *Puck* of ten years or more ago, will yield a harvest of anecdotes that are entertaining and yet new to the present age. A better source is *Everybody's Magazine* of twenty or thirty years ago, with its department entitled "Under the Spreading Chestnut Tree": Or still better, the "Editor's Drawer" department of *Harper's Magazine* of a still earlier time, or the English *Punch*.

Not all of the anecdotes of your collection will be masterpieces of humor. Masterpieces are scarce at any time. Most of the thousands of anecdotes to which the race has listened with pleasure are far from extraordinary in idea. What gives charm is the way the story is told—its graceful dress of arrangement, language and delivery.

Relating the Anecdote.—You must really *know* your story. Your justification for challenging the attention of the company is that this incident is so vivid in your mind that you are impelled to pass it on. Hesitation over names or circumstances gives the lie to the unvoiced assumption, and suggests that you merely want to show off, without having a really good claim upon the company's time. Once you have begun an anecdote, don't hesitate. If names

or circumstances escape you—and everyone's memory at times is tricky—invent them under the spur of the moment and go on.

Do not have it too long. A story of that kind is essentially a miniature; only a few strokes, each building the picture and leading to the point. This calls for sense of the values of words. And act out your story. Do not gurgle into laughter ahead of the listeners, but do not be cold or half-hearted. If you seem afraid of criticism, or conscious of the figure you are cutting, you fail. The listeners feel at once the lack of spontaneity.

Be careful especially about the setting, how you bring in your story. To start on a lively anecdote when the listeners are occupied with other matters—as you also, presumably, should be—is not good art. And beware of pulling your story in by the ear. Bear in mind the classic example of the unfortunate man who had the one story about a gun, which he was forever dragging into the conversation. If nothing else served, it is reported, the wretched man would stamp his foot sharply under the table and then exclaim, "Bless me! Was that a gun? Speaking of guns, etc., etc."

The Difficulty of Getting Fresh Anecdotes.—After all, however, the repetition of formal anecdotes is not worth spending too much effort upon. It has certain very serious drawbacks as an element in conversation. For one thing, to get fresh anecdotes, nowadays, is more difficult than to get fresh eggs. With the old-time tribal tales novelty was not a requirement. Those earlier people, like children today, enjoyed hearing the same stories over and over. But the grown-up of our day wants them new. For us, the pleasure lies in the thrill of surprise when the point pops. At the first hearing, we are delighted; at the second we smile tolerantly; at the third we feel aggrieved at being given old stuff.

Now the problem of finding new anecdotes, under present-day communication conditions, is almost hopeless. With the funny columns of dailies, magazines, and house-organs; the

theatres and entertainers; the multiplication of public dinners; and now the radio—stories sweep the country in a few weeks. Recently a New York lawyer, lunching downtown with three friends, heard an anecdote that one of the party had just brought back from a country town in Mississippi, an episode that had happened there during his stay and had been reported at a local dinner. Two nights later, the lawyer attended a meeting of a dinner club uptown and imparted that story to the half-dozen men at his table as something absolutely new. But when the tables were cleared and the speaking program began, the same story appeared twice over, first in the remarks of the club president and then in a humorous letter from the club secretary, unavoidably detained from the meeting, which was read for him by another member.

Most "New" Stories Are Old.—Some years ago, it is related, on a midwinter trip of a big Atlantic liner, there were only eight first cabin passengers, all of them old travelers. Their meals, at the captain's table, were a round of wit and good fellowship, despite the weather. At the last night's dinner, before breaking up, one of the party remarked: "We've had a mighty good time on this trip. Now let's own up. How many new stories has each of us heard?" They went round the table. This one had heard one new story; that one had heard two; and so it ran. The captain had not heard a single new one.

Everyone knows the paper-backed volumes of "Salesmen's Stories" displayed on news-stands, in which these "new stories" find a resting place year by year. If you will go to the public library and look at a copy of "Joe Miller's Jest-Book," first printed not long after Shakespeare's time and many times reprinted during the century or so that followed, you will be amazed to find how many of the anecdotes that you have listened to and gleefully passed on, in recent years, are in that two-hundred-year old collection. About the only way, indeed, to get a new story of the formal anecdote type—as the newspaper joke-smiths long ago learned—is to make over an old one. The human relation-

ships, the turn of thought, which give the anecdote its point, remain much the same from year to year. For the effect of novelty you must rely upon the new dress.

The Anecdote Addict.—The existence of these printed collections of anecdotes; the "Joe Miller" book, the "Salesmen's Stories," Irvin Cobb's "A Smile a Day," and so on, brings another thought. Such anecdotes are useful as occasional additions to a conversation mixture but we do not want too many of them at a time, and we do not want them out of their place. One of the pests of modern life is the anecdote addict. Men otherwise sensible hail you at any time in the day with "I heard a good story last night," and proceed to inflict upon you an anecdote. Whether new or old, these hunks of humor crammed down one's throat in the broad daylight are no addition to pleasure. To be able to tell such an anecdote well, in its proper setting, is an accomplishment worth having. To be able to refrain, at other times, is a social duty.

Another point may be noted, the dire effect of such canned anecdotes upon the sort of conversation discussed in the last chapter. If one of a pleasant company, in a moment of forgetfulness, swings from the real talk into one of these formal anecdotes, it is apt to mean the end of the talk. When the first man finishes his stunt, someone tells another, and then it goes round the table. One or two may be new and interesting but the others are pretty sure to be hackneyed, yet civility requires everyone to laugh and feign surprise, whatever comes.

It used to be said: "You go to balls in order to learn how to behave in a ballroom. After that you don't need to go to balls." Thus with anecdotes. Practice them, when occasion offers, to gain facility and dramatic skill. Your delivery and language are taken less seriously, when you are telling an anecdote, than in most other types of communication. Try the effect of varying words and shading. But for the purposes of ordinary social conversation, the best advice as regards the telling of set anecdotes

might be: Keep them for the formal dinner gatherings, discussed in Part V, where they have a proper place, but in private chat with friends and intimates, make up your own stories.

Sketches of Life

The story-telling that really counts in familiar conversation is the other type, the narration in easy form of bits of the life you are experiencing and observing, things that have happened to yourself or others in the course of existence. We make toast and coffee right at the table—why not our stories? It is like what the painter or the skilled photographer does with a scene; from the endlessly intricate tissue of life you select a little episode which has a significance or point, and picture this in words that convey to other people something of what you thought and felt when you experienced it.

We know the charm of looking over the sketch-book of an artist who catches with a few strokes the significance of scenes that have struck his fancy as he goes about. There is a similar charm in the talk of those who can make stories out of their everyday experiences. Your friends are always interested in what you have been doing, hearing, reading, thinking, when presented in a bright and flowing way. This sort of story-telling is an art that is in every way worth mastering. Nothing does more to make one a pleasant companion.

Variety of Appeal.—These personal narratives need not be “funny.” Most of them are not. They are better. They touch lightly but sufficiently, with varied appeal, the chords of danger and privation, business or professional achievement, quaintness, pathos—all the many sides of human life. The vogue of comic anecdotes impoverishes the conversation of many a group of people who are capable of better things.

Spontaneity.—Often a man who possesses the ability to relate such incidents is quite unaware of his talent. There is one man,

for instance, of wide contacts and distinguished record in industry—a veteran speaker before technical and shop audiences—who has a rare power of holding a crowd and stimulating them to ask questions, and “talk back.” Yet this man longs for the ability to “tell a story well,” meaning that of dramatic rendition of set anecdotes. He has never realized that his own talk, both on the platform and in private conversation, is set with little vignettes of human achievement, in homely and vigorous language, such as few men can muster. His case is another illustration of the lesson of Dr. Conwell’s lecture on “Acres of Diamonds”—our tendency to overlook the resources we have right at hand.

Art in Formulation.—But there is always the need of shaping and framing the incidents. The same art is required as in building or rebuilding a formal anecdote, or for that matter writing a novel. To recapitulate all that happened in connection with the action reported will tire and confuse the listener. At every moment you have to direct and adapt your little story. Just as the photographer has to adjust his light, distance, and time of exposure, so, when you story-ize the morning happenings in the office, the incidents of a journey, a conversation with an odd character, the plot of a book you have read or a play you have seen, you have to adapt your message to the other man’s mind, to select the items that will be significant for him and to give them the proper perspective, suppressing what is not relevant and touching up other points so that they stand out sufficiently.

Episodes from Common Life.—Such informal narratives are so closely tied up with the circumstances of the occasion that they are not easy to reproduce in print. Now and then, however, such newspaper columns as that of “The Woman Who Saw” in the *New York Sun*, or “On Second Thought,” by Jay House in the *Philadelphia Ledger* and the *New York Evening Post*, contain sketches that come very close to the manner of informal talk narrative.

A certain minister of a church in a midwestern town used to entertain his family and friends with little accounts of his day's experiences that had much of the quality of these sketches. Some of them were amusing, and all of them were interesting, for they had the elements of all good narrative: suggestive set-up, suspense, and surprise. The other clergymen of the town had much the same sort of contacts, but it seemed as if this man led a life of exceptional liveliness and variety, merely because he knew how to translate the casual experiences of daily life into narrative form. His little stories, moreover, lighted up the life of the town for his hearers. They knew some of the people he met. They discovered as they listened that they themselves were having such contacts, without realizing the fact.

The Eye to See—The Impulse to Report.—The subject-matter for such stories need not be at all extraordinary. Now and then an unusual experience of some sort may, of course, give a little special tang to your narrative, but whether the incident is strange or trivial, the listener's pleasure comes from your picturing of the scene. The world's great artists have not won their fame through painting the great and exceptional scenes of nature and human life. Their power has been exercised in revealing the picturesque and dramatic elements which exist in common life but which most of us cannot see without the aid of the artist's interpretation.

Anyone can learn to do this acceptably who has learned to handle himself effectively in the contacts of business and of the club, and who has caught the easy spirit of friendly conversation. It calls for the habit of observing the significant little happenings of life—something, perhaps, of the spirit of endless impersonal curiosity expressed in Kipling's lines:

For to admire and for to see,
For to behold this world so wide,
It never done no good to me,
But I can't drop it if I tried.

It calls also for interest in the nature of people, so that you look behind the face, the gesture, and the half-heard words of someone you meet in the street and speculate as to the character and life they imply. It calls, finally, for readiness of language, liveliness of delivery, and tact in adapting your picture to the individuals in front of you.

Do not let your little narrative sketches run over a few sentences. Just slip them into the conversation when an opening comes. You will be surprised to see how soon you can develop a knack at this sort of reporting when you turn your thought to it definitely. It is easier than most other forms of communication, because the listeners are nearly always receptive, and their interest, if you will pay attention to it, will guide you to the right technique. In the case of the minister in Illinois, often his stories of the day prompted one or more of the listeners to relate experiences of their own, in which they often caught some of their friend's lightness of touch.

The pleasure of this unobtrusive narrative art grows upon you if you just try to be entertaining without trying to make a "big story," and above all, if you refrain from thrusting yourself on the stage as the hero of the action.

Adaptation to the Three Types of Listener.—The detail technique of such story-sized incidents will vary according to your relation to the listeners, and here the differentiation made in the preceding chapter as to strangers, acquaintances, and family and intimates, again becomes useful.

With strangers or chance acquaintances, narratives of this kind are generally brief, unobtrusive or casual in manner, and with great care exercised as to how they are brought in. The dressing or trimming of your incident is highly important. The art that conceals art is especially needed. With persons whom you know fairly well but with whom you are not intimate, you can let yourself go more freely. These people know you well enough to make proper allowance for the feeling and playfulness which you

display, yet not so well but that you still have a certain charm of mystery for each other. With them, accordingly, you can experiment with varied ways of dressing and "toning" your incidents. With family and intimates, on the other hand, such narratives are apt to be more plain and direct. You do not feel like posing with the family.

But family and intimates will comprehend the background more fully and readily. You need less scenery and explanation. They appreciate subtleties of look and intonation. They "read between the lines" and catch the things you do not explicitly say. While acquaintances get the most ornate stories, the most vivid and poignant are those told to the family when you utilize your opportunities. And family and intimates, by the way, enjoy hearing a story over and over. Particularly, they enjoy hearing a familiar narrative told to a new listener. Who cannot remember the pleasure, as a child, in hearing father or mother relate to some acquaintance an incident that had been for years part of the family stock, and observing the listener's reaction?

Some Points of Technique.—There are a few suggestions that will apply generally. Do not tell narratives about yourself. About people whom you meet, yes, but do not let yourself figure largely in the picture. It has been said that one sure test of a man's essential quality is whether he is able to tell a joke on himself. If you bring yourself into your narrative, be sure that you figure in the minor rôle; let the other characters be the heroes. But it is better if you can keep yourself out entirely. A certain New Yorker whose duties as representative of an international concern take him all over the world, is remarkable in this way. His own life is adventurous and unusual in the extreme, but his stories—and he tells many of them and very well—are never about himself; they are always about someone else whom he has met or heard of. By effacing himself from the picture he directs the listener's thought upon the incident itself.

Such an attitude of objectiveness adds greatly to the charm of one's stories of experience. We like to be told what people do, but to affix our own labels to their actions. The story-teller who can report a matter spiritedly but without obvious coloring from his personal feelings, permitting us to draw our own conclusions from the facts he presents to us, has a special welcome. It is well to bear in mind that as in talking of oneself there is always the temptation to brag, a little if not a good deal, so in talking of other people, there is often a temptation to comment upon motives, which very easily slips into gentle maliciousness—a dangerous pleasure. It adds to the spice of the narrative but it brings a touch of uneasiness. The story turns into gossip.

Above all, do not tell your dreams! To yourself they may be screamingly funny, because of the grotesqueness of their contrast with your normal inner life. But that infinitely complex background cannot possibly be made intelligible to anyone else, and hence for the listener your dreams are merely queer or meaningless. The listener has not the key.

The Beginning.—As to the manner of beginning. Do not preface your narrative with "I must tell you this; it's good." That rouses the critical faculties of your listeners. Moreover, it is out of keeping with the rôle you are playing. We do not like to be made to realize that we are listening to a prearranged story. The theory is always that you are reporting a bit of real life and inviting our comment upon it as a fact. So you cannot logically assert that your report is good as a story. Moreover, when the narrative comes in as part of a general discussion, the more unobtrusive and casual the introduction, the more effective it is likely to be. Just slip into it: "Out in . . . they did so-and-so"; "A man told me the other day so-and-so," avoiding any formal preamble.

Sometimes the stage is in a sense set for you; your listener invites you to tell of a certain matter. Then a fuller frame and

more extensive comments may be in order. But even then it is unwise to begin by saying: "This is a very interesting matter."

Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner" offers a classic example of inept adjustment to the hearer. The Mariner had a wonderful tale to tell, but he took a terribly long chance in cramming it down the throat of the Wedding-Guest. Do not imitate him. Choose time and occasion for your narratives.

Not Too Much Detail.—As to the style, the trimming given to the incidents narrated, in the first place it should not be too ornate or detailed. These conversation narratives are best when brief. Do not try to give the entire background, but only a skeleton, a miniature. The arts of conciseness and graphic touch are of priceless value. As in public speaking, you must prove your right to the time of the company, and the time allowance for conversational narrative is shorter than for public speaking. The skills developed in office and club conversation, where you must cover a matter in a definitely limited time, can all be utilized here.

There is always the danger of reminiscing at too great length. Professor Brander Matthews, shortly after his retirement from the Columbia University faculty, was invited by a club of professors of English to give them an evening of reminiscences. He talked most delightfully for two hours and more. But he had fifty years of distinguished experience to tell about, and a specially toughened audience. Generally one's conversational narratives are interesting in proportion to their brevity.

Fancy is an almost indispensable element in all light and entertaining narrative. The pleasure comes through the action of your mind upon the facts you report. But there should be no more than a touch of it—like the garlic in a salad—so that it seems to slip in by accident, unknown to the narrator and recognized by the listener "on the run," neither one stopping to dwell upon the fanciful element.

But Not Too Bald.—At the other extreme is the danger of baldness, coldness. While the naked, laconic style is often excellent

with intimates, it is not generally suitable with other persons, for to those who do not know you it is likely to suggest conceit, self-centeredness, contemptuousness. The over-laconic style is a rather common fault with American business or professional men today. As if afraid of manifesting too plainly their own feelings, they assume a stoical manner of fragmentary statement. The effect is unfortunate, suggesting the impulse to communicate without sufficient command of the medium. There should be enough detail to give the hearer the right perspective. With some persons who are addicts to the laconic style, even their intimates are mystified by their talk.

The amount and style of trimming in the way of descriptive detail, comment, and other indications of the speaker's attitude, will vary according to the speaker's intimacy with his hearer. They will vary also with the importance, the seriousness of the incident itself. Striking and tragic matters are best told barely, in a few broad strokes. For the entertaining trifles that make up so much of all conversation, a more fanciful style is often useful. As with desserts, the manner of serving gives such things much of their value.

"Uction" and Dramatic Sense.—On the whole it may be said that the atmosphere and color in telling a story should always be hearty, not dry or restrained. What the old divines used to call "unction" is needed, and dramatic sense. You should not laugh at your own remarks, but you should show that you feel your story to be interesting and worth while. We are sometimes told of the effectiveness of the speaker who tells a funny story in a grave, quiet manner. But if you will observe such a speaker closely you will invariably discover in his manner a quiet intensity and dramatic suggestiveness.

It is sometimes possible, if one has readiness, fancy, and some literary or dramatic gift, to give these simple personal narratives much of the trimness and punch of good anecdotes. Very likely most of the anecdotes and tales over which the world has laughed

—not those hacked out by newspaper columnists—originated thus in conversation. Possibly many of the stories which Lincoln recounted were made up, or made over, by him, just as Robert Burns took trivial old Scotch songs and turned them into lyric gems.

Common Sense.—At the university club in a big city, once, they had a smoker, an evening of festivity when every member who could do a stunt was to aid in entertaining his club friends. Unfortunately, everybody did a long turn. The program began at 8:00 and was still going at 11:45. The “worst” came when a notable outdoor man rose to give an account of a recent fishing trip in Canada. He talked for fifty-five minutes, in the fragmentary, colorless tone and manner of a man beside a camp-fire with a pipe in his mouth. Up on his feet in front of a crowded roomful it was “terrible.” No wonder the next man called on, a hard-headed professor of Greek who had made money on the side in real estate, merely rose and snapped out: “I had intended to bring Homer’s *Iliad* tonight and read it, but I found it had only twenty-four Books,” and sat down. The fisherman’s effort was a pathetically ill-judged attempt to create, in a crowded formal gathering, the atmosphere of a lazy evening in a camp shack, with all night available for three or four intimates to yarn to each other.

Voice and Utterance.—Telling a story calls for finesse in the use of voice and manner. All sorts of dramatic suggestions are possible, all the arts of “acting” in miniature. The “acting,” however, is not usually a matter of cool, deliberate effort. If you are telling of what you have experienced or what you have thought about intensely, all you have to do is to let yourself go, and nature will do the rest. You will find yourself using devices of impersonation that you would have thought were out of your range. Do not force yourself, but do not hold back.

Dialect.—Sometimes you are impelled to tell a story that involves the use of dialect. First of all, do not fool with the dialect

of people you know nothing about. Trying to pick up Yankee, negro, Irish, cockney, Jewish, Italian, Swedish dialect from the distorted spelling of newspaper columns is mighty little help. And be careful, always, in using a dialect of which you have some knowledge. Pay attention to the little points. Bear in mind that what counts in a dialect is not the sharp twists given to a few outstanding words, but the consistent slight modification or refraction of *all* the words, and of the rhythm of the sentences, and the appropriate adjustment of look and manner.

Ending the Story.—The ending of a story, the disclosure of the point, is highly important. With the formal anecdote, where all realize that they are listening to a "story," the ending is generally sharply dramatic—some sudden turn of phrase or action that springs the trap and brings the laugh or exclamation. In conversational narratives, however, the case is different. The ending should not usually be played up so much, or it will make too sharp a break with the flow of the general talk. The clergyman mentioned above had a sure touch in the ending of his little sketches of the day. They always remained part of the general conversation. They grew out of some point touched on first by another speaker, and at the conclusion he always brought his passengers back to land, ending his stories with some remark that invited comment and started the general talk on its way again. That is the ideal, to tie in your story with the general talk so that the listener may perhaps not realize at all that he has been listening to a "story."

One thing always to bear in mind is that the purpose of these incidental narratives that brighten conversation is partly amusement and partly information and instruction. The entertainment which we obtain from conversation is a composite, jest and earnest blended. Those who are most skilful in conversational narrative pass easily from seriousness to mirth and back again.

CHAPTER XXI

THE REINFORCEMENT OF READING

Books as Records of Life.—The preceding chapters have discussed opportunities offered by private hours for adjustment to situations more intimate and personal than at other times, in which the elements of emotion and imagination enter more largely. In addition, reading may be utilized to supplement in a very special way the training in command of speech that one obtains from social and business conversation, from story-telling, and from experiment with group address. The value of reading aloud as an element in the pleasures of the family circle has already been mentioned. Here let us consider the contribution which this pleasant art can make to your own command of the resources of speech.¹

Books, magazines and newspapers consist in large measure of records of human contacts, records of the situations in which other persons, actual or imagined, have been involved. Now of course the written record of a situation is different in form from the situation itself, and, as explained in some detail in Chapter XXXII, there are many differences, some very minute, some larger, between the way language is used in talk and in writing. No one could learn to talk merely from study of writing, any more than he could learn to write merely from study of talk. Nevertheless, much of the best writing has some of the characteristics of talk; it is addressed by way of the eye to the ear. By disregarding for the moment its *writing* characteristics, regarding it merely as conversation, story-telling, lecture, or group address,

¹ In connection with this chapter you will find it profitable to read Chapters XXXII-XXXIV and perhaps to re-read Chapter XVI.

you can share in some measure the experiences of the other persons whose life it portrays or whose feelings it expresses.

Indirect Contacts.—Now oral reading almost always leads to closer concentration upon just what is said, so that you are led to assume, more fully than in silent reading, the personalities of the people concerned. You make a more or less active effort to adjust yourself to their situations, far removed, perhaps, from those of your own life. This effort develops proportionally your powers of expression, just as the study of his rôles develops the expressive powers of the actor.

Oral reading is thus a sure road to mastery of important secrets of effective talk, one that has been utilized in all ages, and of which you can make as full use as you desire. You learn, almost insensibly, to observe, comprehend, and gradually assimilate the detail technique by which the expressive minds of the race have produced their effects. Reading aloud renders you sensitive to the suggestions of words and their arrangements in writing and in speech. It tunes up and renders supple your whole vocal apparatus so that it serves automatically the slightest direction of the mind or its purposes. In silent reading much escapes our notice, but when a passage is read aloud, three different channels of impression: eye, vocal muscles, and ear, reveal the more minute points of form.

Bringing Out Suggestions.—Read this brief paragraph from a description of a storm at sea in Dickens' novel of "Martin Chuzzlewit":

On, on, on, over the countless miles of angry space roll the long heaving billows. Mountains and caves are here, and yet are not; for what is now the one, is now the other; then all is but a boiling heap of rushing water. Pursuit, and flight, and mad return of wave on wave, and savage struggle, ending in a spouting-up of foam that whitens the black night; incessant change of place, and form, and hue; constancy in nothing, but eternal strife; on, on, on, they roll, and darker grows the night, and louder howls the wind, and more clamorous and fierce become

the million voices in the sea, when the wild cry goes forth upon the storm, "A ship!"

You have the thought in a flash, just as you glimpse a photograph. Now read the lines aloud. What is the difference? It is like the difference between the sight of a photograph and a view of it through the stereoscope, which pulls out into perspective the flat details. The sounds, and the muscular effort of producing them, contribute as definitely as do the meaning of words to our realization of the turbulence of the ocean.

Suggestions as to "Tempo" or Rate of Utterance.—Make an experiment with the following passages, all of them the expression of strong feeling. They are taken from the works of poets, because verse is more compact than prose and will provide better illustrations in brief. Read them first silently. Pay no attention to the verse forms. Just read them for the sense, but observe as fully as you can all of the suggestions of connotations of word or phrase.

Try first a passage from "The Revenge," by Tennyson, the story of a sixteenth-century sea-fight off the Azores:

And the sun went down, and the stars came out far over the
summer sea,

But never a moment ceased the fight of the one and the
fifty-three.

Ship after ship, the whole night long, their high-built
galleons came,

Ship after ship, the whole night long, with her battle-
thunder and flame:

Ship after ship, the whole night long, drew back with her
dead and her shame.

For some were sunk and many were shattered, and so could
fight us no more—

God of battles! was ever a battle like this in the world
before?

Try next this little poem, complete in four lines, written near the close of a long life by a proud, gifted, masterful man, Walter Savage Landor:

I strove with none, for none was worth my strife.
Nature I loved; and next to Nature, Art.
I warmed both hands before the fire of life.
It sinks, and I am ready to depart.

The next, from one of Tennyson's early poems, is familiar to every reader :

Break, break, break
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea !
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

Now read the passages aloud. One point that is likely to draw attention at once is the difference in time distribution. You will discover that the feeling in each passage calls for a particular rate-chart of utterance, so definite, almost, that you can check it by your watch. Your ear will tell you further, that the sound sequence and the movement of muscles in utterance, determined by the form of the word-groups in each passage, are fundamental features of this time-distribution. If you take the trouble to analyze for yourself the details of arrangement in these passages in the light of the discussion in Chapters XVI and XXXI-XXXIII, and then note the way in which you are impelled to utter each selection, you will get some definite notions as to how words are put together to produce different tempos or rates of speed in utterance.

In Tennyson's story of the sea-fight you will note that the thought comes in long units ; that item succeeds item in close logical sequence ; that this close sequence is further emphasized by connective words and parallel structure. You are impelled to read straight along, making only brief pauses, for there is repetition to secure effect in the three successive lines beginning with "ship after ship," and in each only one new unit of meaning.

In the quatrain from Landor you notice the extreme compactness of the statements. Almost every word definitely builds up the meaning. The result is slow and measured utterance, quiet with weight of thought. The thought-groups seem to be units in

themselves, set apart by sustained pauses which the repressed passion of this account of the speaker's own life story demands. This passage, which is almost a succession of monosyllables, is full of devices that make for pithy speech and terse writing. The four lines contain four sentences, seven significant statements.

In the third passage, whereas the first two lines are unusually broken, hesitating, meditative, because of the monosyllables and long pauses, the last two lines sweep into the smooth and wordy pattern of impulsive utterance.

Similar examination of other passages which you can select for yourself in any collection of verse, in the dialogue of a play, in the conversation at the climax-point of a story, in a news story in the evening paper—will extend indefinitely your sense for time-patterns.

Suggestions as to Pitch.—In the next group of passages observe how the oral reading reveals the variation in pitch and note the devices by which this is effected. In some the voice ranges sharply up and down; in others it flows along with little pitch variation; in others there is a recognizable "melody" or "tune" which is almost as definitely marked, when you read the passage aloud, as in a song.

Take this from Macaulay's ballad of "Naseby," one of the battles of Oliver Cromwell and the English Puritans against King Charles the First and his Cavaliers:

They are here! They rush on! We are broken! We are
gone!

Our left is borne before them like stubble on the blast!
O Lord! put forth thy might! O Lord! defend the right!
Stand back to back, in God's name, and fight it to the last!

This is the excited speech of a soldier in oldtime hand-to-hand conflict. It is a series of overlapping waves of ejaculation: first, five cries of dismay that run upward higher and higher; then five cries of combat running downward in stronger and stronger assertion.

The following four lines from the "Essay on Criticism" by the eighteenth century poet, Alexander Pope, are deliberately contrived to illustrate by their cunning scheme of pitch variation, the very point we are considering :

Soft is the strain when Zephyr softly blows,
And the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows;
But when loud surges lash the sounding shore,
The hoarse, rough verse should like the torrent roar.

Here the first two lines are smooth and almost in a monotone ; in the last two the voice jerks up and down, and nearly every word contributes, by the rough consonants and the sharp contrast of vowels to the suggestion of stormy waves.

Try these lines from "The Shell," by James Stephens, an Irish poet of our own day, which put into words fancies that perhaps everyone has had, some time or other :

And then I pressed the shell
Close to my ear
And listened well,
And straightway, like a bell,
Came low and clear
The slow, sad murmur of the distant seas,
Whipped by an icy breeze
Upon a shore
Windswept and desolate.
It was a sunless strand that never bore
The footprint of a man,
Nor felt the weight
Since time began
Of any human quality or stir
Save what the dreary winds and waves incur.
And in the hush of waters was the sound
Of pebbles rolling round,
Forever rolling with a hollow sound.

Here, manifestly, the speaker is merely thinking aloud. The voice runs along with little contrast of pitch anywhere, as one dreamy fancy follows another ; it ranges gradually higher and

higher through the first nine lines, then gradually drops and dies away in the last nine lines.

Or take this verse from a poem that has fired the enthusiasm of millions for over a hundred years, by the greatest master of lyric verse in English—even though the “English” which he employed was a Scotch dialect—Robert Burns:

Then let us pray that come it may,
As come it will for a' that.
That sense and worth, o'er a' the earth,
May bear the gree', an' a' that.
For a' that, an' a' that,
It's coming yet, for a' that,
That man to man, the warld o'er,
Shall brothers be, for a' that.

Here the speaker is not “thinking aloud”; he is carried along in a burst of generous passion, and his thought is a succession of triumphant assertions. The first line fervent but quiet; the second an eager interruption, with emphasis on “will” and the voice sliding up on “a' that”; the third line rising to the climax of “a' the earth,” and then the voice dropping in the strong assertion of the fourth line. The refrain in the fifth and sixth lines vehemently reasserts the speaker's faith, with the voice held up as in the second line; the seventh line brings a second climax and finally the voice crashes down in two strong assertions in the last line.

Movement Suggested by Rhythm and Cadence.—In the next group of passages observe how oral reading brings to attention the ways in which suggestions from time distribution and from pitch variation may be combined with suggestions from the different *quality* of the sounds in particular words or word-groups; some of the sound groups gentle and smooth; some rough and harsh; some actually imitating characteristic sounds in the scenes described. With what accuracy *movement* can be suggested through the arrangement of words you can judge from the fol-

lowing brief stanzas. The first three of them are from poems by Robert Browning:

Kentish Sir Byng stood for his King,
Bidding the crop-headed Parliament swing:
And, pressing a troop unable to stoop
And see the rogues flourish and honest folk droop,
Marched them along, fifty score strong,
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song.
(*Marching Along*, from "Cavalier Tunes")

Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!
Rescue my castle before the hot day
Brightens to blue from its silvery gray,
(Chorus) "*Boot, saddle, to horse and away!*"
(*Boot and Saddle*, from "Cavalier Tunes")

I sprang to the stirrup, and Joris, and he;
I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all three;
"Good speed!" cried the watch, as the gate-bolts undrew;
"Speed!" echoed the wall to us galloping through;
Behind shut the postern, the lights sank to rest,
And into the midnight we galloped abreast.
("How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix")

The next is in a poem by Alfred Noyes: "The Highwayman."

The wind was a torrent of darkness among the gusty trees,
The moon was a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas,
The road was a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor,
And the highwayman came riding—
Riding—riding—
The highwayman came riding, up to the old inn-door.

The last from Sir Walter Scott's "Marmion":

Oh, young Lochinvar is come out of the west;
Through all the wide Border his steed was the best;
And save his good broadsword, he weapon had none;
He rode all unarmed, and he rode all alone,
So faithful in love, and so dauntless in war,
There never was knight like the young Lochinvar.

Now go back to the first of these stanzas and read it aloud. Is there not, in the very syllables and their arrangement, the steady step and swing of marching men? And in the very pulse and succession of those sound symbols, is there not the strength and power of concerted action? What of the refrain?

Marched them along, fifty score strong,
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song.

Has it not the lilt that makes a song or a tune live?

Turn to the second of the selected stanzas. Even as the eye sweeps the lines the speed of the movement is suggested. Read aloud, you almost hear the beat of trim hoofs, and note the utter grace of trained rider and fine beast in the extended gallop of a really fast horse. Note the lively chorus.

In the third selection, there is the clatter and noise of heavier horses as eager riders urge them out of the town on the mission of the night. Some evening when the fancy takes you, look through your copy of Browning for this and the two Cavalier tunes.

In the fourth of the extracts you find more than the riding or galloping. The first three lines paint a large canvas and across this the lone figure of the rider moves. The movement seems to be that of a canter rather than a full gallop. The mood is very different from that of any of the preceding verses. There is the threat of hidden or imminent danger in the rhythm and color of the lines. Read the whole of it some time.

In the fifth and last of the selections the familiar figure of youthful valor, whose name is now a descriptive term in the language, comes prancing out of his stately century on a matchless charger. Try this also, aloud.

To get a notion of how much the cadence and rhythm of the verse contribute to the total effect you might read aloud the first two lines of each stanza in the order in which they are printed below :

1. Kentish Sir Byng stood for his King, (march on foot)
Bidding the crop-headed Parliament swing:
5. Oh, young Lochinvar is come out of the west; (prance)
Through all the wide Border his steed was the best;
4. The wind was a torrent of darkness among the gusty trees, (canter)
The moon was a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas,
3. I sprang to the stirrup, and Joris, and he; (gallop)
I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all three;
2. Boot, saddle, to horse and away!
Rescue my castle before the hot day (full gallop)

The Salvation Army March.—Writers of power have made striking use of rhythm suggestions to reinforce the imaginative vigor of their thought. These verses, for example, from the curious poem by Vachel Lindsay, "General William Booth Enters Heaven," reproduce with their intricate movement much of the noisy slam-bang Salvation Army march which they picture:

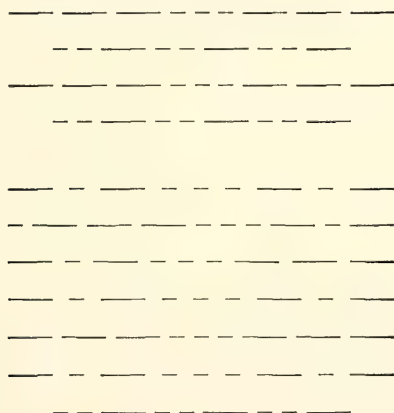
Booth led boldly with his big bass drum.
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?
The saints smiled gravely, and they said "He's come."
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

Every slum had sent its half a score
The round world over—Booth had groaned for more.
Every banner that the wide world flies
Bloomed with glory and transcendent dyes.
Big-voiced lassies made their banjos bang!
Tranced, fanatical, they shrieked and sang,
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

Booth died blind, and still by faith he trod,
Eyes still dazzled by the ways of God.
Booth led boldly and he looked the chief;
Eagle countenance in sharp relief,
Beard a-flying, air of high command
Unabated in that holy land.

Jesus came from out the Court-House door,
 Stretched his hands above the passing poor.
 Booth saw not, but led his queer ones there
 Round and round the mighty Court-House square.
 Yet in an instant all that blear review
 Marched on spotless, clad in raiment new.
 The lame were straightened, withered limbs uncurled,
 And blind eyes opened on a new, sweet world.

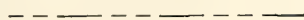
Read this aloud according to the following time-pattern, in which the long dashes represent the long loud words and the short dashes those that are rapid and light:



The slight variations from this pattern in lines 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10 do not affect the fundamental rhythm of



for the lines of the stanzas, and



for the lines of the refrain.

Physical Weariness.—In Kipling's "Boots," about British campaigning in the South African War, you get a picture of a

different sort of march, the slow, dogged movement of utter weariness:

We're foot—slog—slog—slog—sloggin' over Africa!
Foot—foot—foot—foot—sloggin' over Africa—
(Boots—boots—boots—boots—movin' up and down again!)
There's no discharge in the war!

Seven—six—eleven—five—nine—an—twenty mile today—
Four—eleven—seventeen—thirty-two the day before—
(Boots—boots—boots—boots—movin' up and down again!)
There's no discharge in the war!

Don't—don't—don't—don't—look at what's in front of you
(Boots—boots—boots—boots—movin' up and down again!)
Men—men—men—men—men—go mad with watchin' 'em,
An' there's no discharge in the war!

Try—try—try—try—to think o' something different—
Oh my God keep me from goin' lunatic!
(Boots—boots—boots—boots—movin' up an' down again!)
There's no discharge in the war!

Certainly, this is not the gait of "Kentish Sir Byng stood for his King," nor yet of Gen. Booth's triumphant host. Casual silent reading of the passage gives little notion of what it is all about. The eye in sweeping from line to line of repeated syllables finds confusion. To repeat the same word many times may also seem to result in unsatisfactory reading. But consider the nature of the material in the verses. An individual British soldier, of the infantry, is speaking. He is not the blithe young person of dress parade. The mechanical suggestions in the lines are not those of the easy swing of fresh troops on the drill ground. There is the sense of effort, of the mass effort of many tired bodies forced by will to conquer the ground; and they conquer it, not in the familiar quickstep (128 per minute) but in the everlasting rhythm of the route step (around 100 per minute). Millions of men who speak English now read "Boots" with far greater sympathy and truer appreciation than they did in their schoolboy

days. It requires a little study before you read it aloud. This is the complaint of a soldier who is actually on the march; he carries a heavy pack; he has been on the march all day, probably he does not know his destination.

Now try it:

We're foot—slog—slog—slog—sloggin'—over Africa!

In each stanza the plaint of the soldier is uttered first in the dull semi-conscious repetition of monosyllables like *slog*, *men*, *boots*; next in the conscious recollections such as “don't look at what's in front of you”; then, in a sort of hysterical last line—(“go mad with watchin' 'em”); finally, in the wail of resignation that makes the refrain.

But the time is slow; it is the measured motion through which men sleep—60 steps per stanza in about 36 seconds or roughly 100 per minute.

Try it with your watch in hand. Kipling knows about soldiering.

Suggestions of Color and Melody.—Thus far we have had to do with selections from the poets in which the simple and obvious rhythm of galloping horses or marching men established to a great degree the mood of the poet. When you read something like “The Prayer Rug,” by Sara Beaumont Kennedy, you find a very different mood and a corresponding difference in the music of the lines.

As supple as a tiger's skin
With wine hues and ochre blent,
It lies upon my polished floor—
Four square feet of the orient
No more than that, yet space enough
On which to build a wonder-dream
Of that far town which, half asleep
And half a myth
Lies 'neath the crescent's golden gleam.

In this, which is the first stanza of the poem (there are six more stanzas), you stand with the poet gazing at the rug. As you utter the lines aloud you are conscious of no marked movement in the verse but there is the hint of quiet melody. It is pleasing to the ear and yet not striking enough to disturb the reflective mood cast upon the reader as he looks upon "four square feet of the orient" with the verse-maker and lets his mind travel to the "far town" "'neath the crescent's golden gleam."

If you have not had occasion to try it you will be surprised at the rewards of the reader who takes the trouble to read one poem many times. The patch of color in which a painter has caught and recorded a bit of landscape adorns a wall for years and many times our eyes pay tribute to the beauties of which it is a symbol and a reflection. What of the poet's art? All that painter and sculptor give to the eye, he gives, and more. To the ear he grants the delights of music, not in detached splendor but in graceful accompaniments for the fires of mind and heart which lighted his thoughts.

Thought, Feeling, and Sound.—Three hundred years ago George Herbert wrote this religious poem, eighteen lines long. It is dramatic in form, giving a complete dialogue that is vivid and direct in wording yet smoothly fitted to the limits of the measure or metre. As you read it, observe the homely and familiar words; the simple structure; the quiet rhythm; the swift effectiveness in sound or in meaning of the words that mark the pauses. Mark the little story too; how it rises to a climax of intense feeling and then sinks at the end into gentle satisfaction and relief.

Love bade me welcome! Yet my soul drew back,
Guilty of dust and sin.
But quick-eyed Love (observing me grow slack
From my first entrance in)
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning,
'If I lacked any thing?'

'A guest,' I answered, 'worthy to be here!'
Love said, 'You shall be he!'
'I! the unkind! ungrateful! Ah! my dear,
I cannot look on Thee!'
Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,
'Who made the eyes but I!'
'Truth, Lord! But I have marred them! Let my shame
Go where it doth deserve!'
'And know you not,' says Love, 'who bore the blame!'
'My dear, then I will serve!'
'You must sit down,' says Love, 'and taste my meat!'
So I did sit and eat.²

What You Can Learn from Prose.—Color, movement, sense of form, melody and word magic are not by any means confined to poetry. Speech often has form, color and melody; your ear will tell you that. Speech is too fleeting for study, but in the prose works of masters of English you will find passages that more than meet the conscious ear's demands. In the course of your own reading you will find notable passages, often in the oddest of places; in newspaper articles; in reported speeches; in fiction, even in the fifteen cent magazines of adventure and other soporifics of that type. Wherever you find them, one test will serve you quickly and well. Read them aloud! The best prose satisfies the ear as well as the eye. In the Bible, long ago called "The Great Repository of Stately Prose," you will find great passages whenever you care to look for them. Have you ever read these lines aloud:

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing . . . (I Corinthians xiii: 1-3)

² George Herbert (1593-1633), clergyman, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge.

As you read this a second or third time, notice the irregular but appropriate rhythm. Even in this brief portion of the address to the Corinthians note the climactic force of the successive statements. Look twice at some of the words and phrases:

sounding brass
tinkling cymbal

Try any one of your favorite selections from the same source. Try to analyze the appeal to the ear.

A Bit of Four-Hundred-Year Old Prose.—Wherever you happen to be browsing, stop now and then to read a paragraph aloud. Not all of your chance findings will prove equally good to the ear. No matter. The very process of reading aloud helps to render the ear sensitive to elements in language never revealed in the silent sweep of the eye. In Book II of "*Toxophilus*,"³ written in 1545, almost four hundred years ago, in the form of a dialogue between *Toxophilus, lover of the bow* and *Philologus, a scholar*, Roger Ascham discusses "*The Ways of the Wind*." Read silently:

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To see the wind with a man his eyes, it is impossible, the nature of it is so fine and subtle; yet this experience of the wind had I once myself, and that was in the great snow that fell four years ago. I rode in the highway betwixt Topcliffe-on-Swale and Boroughbridge, the way being somewhat trodden before by wayfaring men. The fields on both sides were plain and lay almost yard deep with snow; the night afore had been a little frost, so that the snow was hard and crusted above: That morning the sun shone bright and clear, the wind was whistling aloft, and sharp, according to the time of the year. The snow in the highway lay loose and trodden with horse' feet: so as the wind blew, it took the loose snow with it, and made it so slide up on the snow in the field, which was hard and crusted by the frost overnight, that thereby I might see very well the whole nature of the wind as it blew that day. And I had a great delight in pleasure to mark it, which maketh me now far better to remember it.

³ This was a treatise, written as the author remarked in his preface, "in the English tongue for English men," to defend and promote the pastime of archery and the use in war of the archer's weapon. In the face of new inventions Ascham preached the doctrine of the long bow as some men hold to the rifle today.

When you start to read this paragraph as you would any other piece of prose, something happens to the "*eye-sweep*." You stop. What is the trouble? The words that Queen Elizabeth's old tutor and privy councillor used here are all current today: *wind, man, eyes, impossible, fine, subtle, snow, trodden, wayfaring*. All are in common speech today except the last which is regarded now as literary or poetic and is replaced by *traveling*. But try to read aloud:

"To see the wind with a man his eyes, it is impossible. . . ."

The difficulty lies in the strange "with a man his eyes," but the sense is obvious and the voice renders the old form of expression perfectly intelligible to modern ears:

To see the wind, with a man his eyes, (i.e., with a man's eyes)
It is impossible, the nature of it is so fine and subtle.

as if to say in more modern word patterns,

To see the wind with the eyes of man is impossible; it is
so

The whole difficulty arises from the erroneous idea current in Ascham's day that the possessive *s* was a contraction of *his*.

Now read the whole selection aloud. You will find quaint departures from the word patterns in use in the vernacular today and you will be amused at the rhythms of our older prose. Attention to the rhythm will enable you to detect at once an unfamiliar word or sound pattern; your critical judgment will be challenged, to decide whether the sound sequence is an attractive element in the passage, presenting the thought in a particularly effective and pleasing way, or rather an impediment.

Some Prose of Later Times.—Come a little nearer modern times, to the prose writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Here you find little that is strange to our ears—merely an occasional word that has gone out of use, or a more leisurely

gait of expression. Work over the brief selections that follow, chosen at random from various authors:

A good orator should pierce the ear, allure the eye, and invade the mind of his hearer. And this is Seneca's opinion: fit words are better than fine ones. I like not those that are injudiciously made; but such as be expressively significant, that lead the mind to something beside the naked term. And he that speaks this must not look to speak thus every day. A *kembed* (combed) Oration will cost both sweat and the rubbing of the brain. And *kembed* I wish it, not *frizzled* nor *curled*. *Divinity* should not lascivate. (*On Preaching*, from "Resolves," by Owen Felt-ham, 1602-1688)

To excel in any profession, in which but few arrive at mediocrity, is the most decisive mark of what is called genius or superior talents. The publick admiration which attends upon such distinguished abilities, makes always a part of their regard; a greater or small in proportion as it is higher or lower in degree. It makes a considerable part of it in the profession of physick; a still greater perhaps in that of law; in poetry or philosophy it makes almost the whole. (*The Rewards of the Professions*, from "The Wealth of Nations," by Adam Smith, 1723-1790)

I remember an old scholastic aphorism, which says 'that the man who lives wholly detached from others, must be either an angel or a devil.' When I see in any of these detached gentlemen of our times the angelic purity, power and beneficence, I shall admit them to be angels. In the mean time we are born only to be men. We shall do enough if we form ourselves to be good ones. It is therefore our business carefully to cultivate in our minds, to rear to the most perfect vigor and maturity, every sort of generous and honest feeling that belongs to our nature. To bring the dispositions that are lovely in private life into the service and conduct of the commonwealth; so to be patriots as not to forget we are gentlemen. To cultivate friendships, and to incur enmities. To have both strong, but both selected: in the one to be placable; in the other immoveable. To model our principles to our duties and our situation. To be fully persuaded, that all virtue which is impracticable is spurious; and rather to run the risque of falling into faults in a course which leads us to act with effect and energy, than to loiter out our days without blame, and without use. Public life is a situation of power and energy:

he trespasses against his duty who sleeps upon his watch, as well as he that goes over to the enemy. (From "Thoughts on the Present Discontents," by Edmund Burke, 1729-1797)

Whatever quaint variations you note in the first two of these passages of old-time prose, certainly in the last there is nothing to indicate that it was not written or spoken yesterday. With the labels of authorship and date removed it is quite likely that the reader would be apt to attribute it to a living author. Read it several times. Ask another to read it aloud for you.

The Movement of the Work as a Whole.—But the practice of oral reading once developed does more than simply to reveal the possibilities of rhythm and sound sequence, or euphony. It brings out the movement and structure of the whole poem, speech, essay or play. It gives insight into the design and general craftsmanship of the author, so that the interior harmonies, the "purple passages" often quoted out of context, the new phrase, the burning word, even the order of the parts, all assume their proper places as elements in an artistic whole. Being conscious of these things and full of the intimate contact with word, phrase, structure and sound pattern that the practice of oral reading gives, every hour devoted to this practical art is an hour devoted to the improvement of your own mastery of the detail technique of language. You are both listener and critic. At the same time you are aware of the claim upon your interest and of the device employed by the artist. You have the pleasure of the reader in a good opening and the profit of the observer; eagerly you follow the action of the play or story, and with equal interest the development of theme or plot; you are relieved and instructed by the author's devices for relief; and the well turned conclusion impresses you as reader and satisfies you as judge.

Hawthorne.—There is nothing burdensome about this form of language study. It is easily grafted upon any branch of reading habit. If you like fiction, read that. Simply add to your

pleasure by reading aloud the portions of the story or novel that have a particular appeal for you. Or recall the delights of old favorites by rereading them aloud. Do you recall the beginning of Hawthorne's novel, "The House of the Seven Gables"?

I

THE OLD PYNCHION FAMILY

Half-way down a by-street of one of our New England towns, stands a rusty wooden house, with seven acutely peaked gables, facing toward various points of the compass, and a huge clustered chimney in the midst. The street is Pyncheon Street; the house is the old Pyncheon house; and an elm tree of wide circumference, rooted before the door, is familiar to every town-born child by the title of the Pyncheon-elm. On my occasional visits to the town aforesaid, I seldom fail to turn down Pyncheon Street, for the sake of passing through the shadow of these two antiquities—the great elm-tree and the weather-beaten edifice.

The aspect of the venerable mansion has always affected me like a human countenance, bearing the traces not merely of outward storm and sunshine, but expressive, also, of the long lapse of mortal life. . . .

Do you, too, like to turn down Pyncheon Street when you visit the old town of Salem, pass through the shadow mentioned in this romance which the author finished in 1851, and gaze out to the harbor that holds so quaint a place in American maritime history? Or do you like to enter the old mansion and climb the secret stair in the chimney closet? If you go to Salem you may drive to the door and park your car with the others. You may pay your fee to the society that supports the playground and day nursery and thus gain entrance to the old house. Within you will see the old treasures. As you examine tables and chairs and colonial cupboard your ear will catch the sound of motor horn or the drone of 'plane. But any evening at home you may visit the Pyncheons at Salem, see the old town in its heyday and glimpse the world as it was when merchants of the seven seas lived in its stately mansions and sailed forth from its busy wharfs.

Swift.—Or it may be that your current reading in history has led you back to the time of George I in England, and by that

way to "The Voyage to Lilliput" which was doubtless the most fascinating of "Gulliver's Travels." Have you read the harmless tale that has delighted the children of many generations since you first found it in a story book? Do you recall the emperor's diversions?

There is likewise another diversion, which is only shown before the emperor and empress and first minister, upon particular occasions. . . .

The emperor holds a stick in his hands, both ends parallel to the horizon, while the candidates, advancing one by one, sometimes leap over the stick, sometimes creep under it backwards and forwards several times, according as the stick is advanced or depressed. Sometimes the emperor holds one end of the stick, and his first minister the other; sometimes the minister has it entirely to himself. Whoever performs his part with most agility, and holds out the longest in leaping and creeping, is rewarded with the purple colored silk; the yellow is given to the next, and the white to the third, which they all wear girt twice round about the middle; and you see few great persons about this court who are not adorned with one of these girdles. (Part I, Book II, Chapter 3, of "Gulliver's Travels," by Jonathan Swift, 1667-1745)

Even the mere breath of the story here reprinted will serve to recall Gulliver's whimsical adventures, the mathematical exactness of the Lilliputian world, the ingenious development of the story. Brief as it is, the extract gives some notion of the utterly simple and lucid narrative style that makes this work a most delightful book for children (omitting certain passages) and at the same time the most ingenious and pitiless of satires. The very naturalness of the story is tribute to the consummate literary skill of the unhappy artist.

Thackeray.—It may be that you will come upon a brief passage like this from the end of Thackeray's "Newcomes." Read it through in the usual manner.

At the usual evening hour the chapel bell began to toll, and Thomas Newcome's hands outside the bed feebly beat a-time. And just as the last bell struck, a peculiar sweet smile shone over his face, and he lifted up his head a little, and quickly said "Adsum!" and fell back. It was the word we used at school, when names were called; and lo, he, whose

heart was that of a little child, had answered to his name, and stood in the presence of the Master.

The eye sweeps down the brief paragraph and the record is made.

Ah, yes . . . At the last stroke of
the evening bell. . . . Thomas Newcome
said "Adsum" and died. . . .

Now read the passage with your ear, attending to the first principle of good reading, that of phrasing. Read aloud:

At the usual evening hour,
the chapel bell begun to toll
and Thomas Newcome's hands
outside the bed
feebly beat a-time.
And just as the last bell struck,
a peculiar sweet smile
shone over his face
and he lifted up his head a little,
and quickly said
"Adsum!"
and fell back.
It was the word we used at school
when names were called;
and lo,
he,
whose heart was that of a little child,
had answered to his name,
and stood in the presence of the Master.

Reading thus, not in words or lines or even sentences, but in thought groups, reveals still more clearly the element of sound in language. Here are phrases and word groups which even in silent reading present the scene of that death bed. But when they are read aloud, carefully preserving the natural grouping of good utterance, you have the same scene of course, but with every element of its description intensified. The very sounds of the

words and the successions of those sounds represent an element of intangible beauty added to the effect.

You will not fail to note the various qualities of voice that are brought into play in the almost unconscious effort that the reader puts forth to recreate the effect that the author has contrived. Note what happens in your reading when you reach the phrase "and lo." Has the emotional effect of the thought a characteristic effect upon your manner of oral expression? Does the voice seem to accommodate itself to something in the line? Read the passage once more and note what to do with:

toll
feebly
a little
"Adsum!"

Keep these things in mind when you read other passages.

Good Prose of Our Own Day—Everett Martin.—You will come to value more and more in this study the force of simple statement. In the random reading that we all do, as well as in our more serious reading, we cannot fail to discover many pages worthy of study and oral testing. It makes little difference whether the book be ancient or modern, fiction or fact, philosophy or science. A good paragraph will stand the test of a critical ear. Read this from Everett Martin's "The Meaning of a Liberal Education":⁴

To my mind, an educated person is not merely one who can do something, whether it is giving a lecture on the poetry of Horace, running a train, trying a lawsuit, or repairing the plumbing. He is also one who knows the significance of what he does, and he is one who cannot and will not do certain things. He has acquired a set of values. He has a "yes" and a "no" and they are his own. He knows why he behaves as he does. He has learned what to prefer, for he has lived in the presence of things that are preferable. I do not mean that he is merely trained in the conventions of polite society or the conformities of crowd morality. He will doubtless depart from both in many things. Whether he con-

⁴ Everett Dean Martin, *The Meaning of a Liberal Education*, W. W. Norton Co.

forms or not, he has learned enough about human life on this planet to see his behavior in the light of a body of experience and the relation of his actions to situations as a whole. Such a person is acquiring a liberal education and it makes little difference whether he has been trained in philosophy or mechanics. He is being transformed from an automaton into a thinking being.

Now read it aloud!

Here is order in word, phrase, and sentence; meaning, simple and direct; a definition of an educated person, what he is and what he is not; and throughout, the successions of sounds that make the rhythm of this prose are perfectly satisfactory to the ear. The paragraph is a complete unit, too. There is a beginning, a development of the idea advanced and a summarizing remark. It is an excellent example of a definition, as it is discussed in Chapter XV. The author is Director of The People's Institute of New York. His language is that of speech, for the book is composed of lectures given at Cooper Union. Have you ever tried to frame in this manner a definition of some such idea?

A Well-Built Paragraph.—The other chapters or lectures in Dr. Martin's book are equally pleasing. Here is a paragraph from the closing chapter, "Adult Education in America":

Adult education is selective. Its aim is not to provide a slight increase of information and a few noble sentiments for the rank and file, but to select out of the undifferentiated mass those who are naturally capable of becoming something more than automatons. These need no credits or examinations or promise of diplomas to spur them to intellectual effort. They would gain wisdom if there were no educational institutions, or classes, or lectures. But they need advice and the fellowship of other studious minds, for they are often lonely. Very few even professional students can easily carry on their studies when isolated from their kind. Hence the existence of universities. The rush and racket of our industrial civilization are so great that there is need to establish for those whose minds can rise above it, an environment where thought is leisurely and where people may be found who have had learning long enough to be at home with it. The isolated student like the person learning to

swim, makes much needless effort. He tries to stuff his head with learning. He needs time to meditate upon what he learns, talk about it, assimilate it, see its relations to his knowledge and experience as a whole. I believe this to be the value of group discussion, where there is a real meeting of minds. I do not, however, as some seem to do, believe that a company of uninformed people talking nonsense are necessarily engaged in a work of mutual education. It is not as groups that men may attain wisdom. With all the aid possible from others, education is necessarily an individual achievement.

Vigorous thought in appropriate language you will say. Read it aloud two or three times. Now note how the course of thought stands out:

Education is selective. (*The first sentence states briefly the topic, the theme.*)

Its aim is—

not to—

but to select—capable— (*A repetition and expansion of the topic. Note how emphasis is focused upon the closing statement and the homeliness of its terms.*)

(*The rest of the paragraph explains what such capable persons need and how adult education can aid them.*)

These need no credits—

would gain wisdom— (*Crisp statements; antithesis and climax.*)

But they need advice

and fellowship—

for they are often lonely— (*Note the emphasis on this short closing statement.*)

Even professional students— (*need fellowship, etc.*)

hence universities— (*This passage utilizes touches of colorful statement—"rush and racket."*)

need environment of leisurely thought—

people—at home with learning. (*Note the homely phrase with which the thought is closed.*)

The isolated student—(*especially needs fellowship*)

expends needless effort—

tries to stuff his head—

needs time to meditate

talk

assimilate— (*Note again the homeliness of wording and the directness of the arrangement.*)

This is the value of group discussion—

(*Then note how the thought swings into a correction of possible mistaken inference and a repetition of the main thought at the close.*)

It is not as groups that men may attain wisdom.

Education—an individual achievement.

A highly instructive feature of the passage, which oral reading brings out clearly, is the combination of earnestness with moderation. There is a series of earnest statements, some brought out with colorful terms, others with strong colloquial phrases. But the author does not "rub it in." After each strong statement he picks up the discussion quietly and easily.

Analysis of this passage, or of any bit of well-written prose, with the aid of the suggestions reached through the voice, reveals the devices used by skilful writers to convey a wealth of meaning through the forms of perfectly normal prose.

Of course, reading aloud as a practical exercise is not limited to the study of exceptional passages—"purple passages," they have been called. These reflect or illustrate the extreme dominance of a certain mood or impulse in the speaker or writer—and such dominance is always extraordinary. Most human communication is more matter of fact, and at the same time more complex. The words of our daily life are often charged with intense feeling; we may grow absurdly angry with a stranger or with an associate, over a trifle. But the emotion is rarely unmixed; it is blended with and modified by other emotions. The results, in terms of wording and delivery, are less obvious than those of the "purple passages." You will find it worth while, therefore, to

give particular attention to the suggestions of form that are to be found in ordinary communication. It would be interesting to analyze an experiment with passages in the pages of your evening paper: direct narrative, common dialogue, everyday descriptions, reasoning about this and that.

Reading Plays.—You will find particular pleasure and profit in reading plays—plays of our own time, to begin with. In the lines of a play you have real talk. The dramatic artist has to fashion his work in the authentic speech of his characters. The events of the play present these characters under the stress of feeling. Here you have everyday speech recorded in a form that can be studied. If much of it is not close to your own everyday talk, some of it is very close and on the whole it is very much closer than the other forms of writing.

For one thing, the emphasis in a play is not on mere words, but rather on emotions. The language forms employed are familiar and easy, a fact which makes it possible for you to devote a very large share of your attention to the feelings exhibited and expressed by the characters. In doing this you cannot fail to observe the various kinds of emotion called forth in the action of the play and the differing intensities of each. As you proceed, you will find a certain exhilaration in calculating and expressing the exact shade of feeling called for by the lines. This will be particularly true of the stronger stages of the emotions which can hardly be studied in the actual circumstances of life. You will find too, that the rapid shift from one character to another required in the reading of a play makes for flexibility in expression that can be attained through no other exercise. In turn, in the course of a few pages, as you read along, you may be an old man of wealth and position, with a bad temper; a poor young man but very cheerful; a housemaid; a lovely heiress; a family physician, and so on. You will be surprised to find how readily, after a very little experiment, you are able to adapt yourself, so as to read the lines with manner and utterance suited to

each of the characters of the action. This ready alteration of the powers of expression will develop sensitiveness of eye and ear upon which facility and versatility of expression depend.

It has been pointed out above, that such oral reading of literature serves to supplement the emotional experiences of your personal life. It stores your mind, though in the main unconsciously, with acceptable "patterns" of rhythm, of melody, of intonation and of word grouping, which have been used by your race and to which others respond just as you do. Then, when you have occasion to express ideas that call for such patterns, you will find them ready in your mind.

Short Plays.—The modern one-act play is admirably suited to your purpose. It is of convenient length and can be read aloud in half an hour or so. Of one-act plays which have the decided advantage of brevity there are numerous anthologies. Margaret G. Mayorga has compiled "Representative One-Act Plays by American Authors," containing the complete texts of twenty-four actually produced in Little Theatres. Frank Shay and Pierre Loving offer an edition of "Fifty Contemporary One-Act Plays," a selection of great merit and considerable variety including works of foreign authors. "Representative One-Act Plays by British and Irish Authors," edited by Barrett H. Clark, contains twenty-one texts by such well-known craftsmen as Pinero, Jones, Yeats, Dunsany, Granville Barker, and Arnold Bennett.

Your evening's entertainment need never suffer from lack of variety. The public library can furnish you with many a volume. Collections may be purchased in most cases for less than the price of a couple of the worst seats in the largest theatre in the city.

Here is a list of collections of one-act plays which may be obtained through any bookshop and are in nearly all public libraries.

Lord Dunsany: Five Plays. Little Brown.

Plays of the 47 Workshop, Vols. 1-6. Brentano.

Lady Gregory: Seven Short Plays. Putnam.

The Provincetown Plays, six volumes. Frank Shay.

Margaret G. Mayorga: Representative One-Act Plays by American Authors.

Barrett H. Clark (editor): Representative One-Act Plays. Samuel French.

E. Van B. Knickerbocker (editor): Twelve Plays. Holt. Plays for Classroom Interpretation. Holt.

LONGER PLAYS

G. P. Baker (editor): Modern American Plays. Harcourt Brace and Howe, 1920.

Helen L. Cohen: Longer Plays by Modern Authors. Harcourt Brace, 1922.

Longer Plays.—The one-act plays may lead you to longer ones, many of which—even of the recent acting successes—are now available in inexpensive form. One of these longer plays will furnish material for several evenings, perhaps, of keen enjoyment.

If you are interested in such reading go a little further and try an eighteenth century comedy such as “She Stoops to Conquer,” by Oliver Goldsmith, or “The Rivals,” by Richard Brinsley Sheridan. Reading these plays of earlier times reveals, as nothing else does, how the people of that day lived. As you utter their lines, compare them with the men and women of today. In dress, and in some of their words they differ. But what of their manners, moods, feelings? When you get to know them, are they not the same? And in gaining this intimate contact with the talk of past generations, are you not gaining better control of the mother tongue and its auxiliaries?

Shakespeare.—Then go back to Shakespeare. Do not think of him as the literary light of the ages. Remember that in truth Shakespeare was a popular playwright and actor—the George Cohan of his day, he has been called. His plays were neither published nor read in his own lifetime, but were brought out year after year on the popular stage for the one sufficient reason that people wanted to see and hear them. In those days the emphasis was on the *hearing*, and this fact, you will discover, is a vast help in your study. When you read a Shakespeare play aloud, “throw-

ing yourself into it" and handling it just as informally as you do a modern play, it opens up. While the sentences are often different in structure from our own, and some of the words are strange, what the characters say, you will find, is real talk. If you will just read these plays in the same spirit that takes you to the plays of today, you will open for leisure hours a wide field of enjoyment.

It is not at all unlikely that many a play of Shakespeare, if scenes and dress were altered, would make a modern success. Recently "The Taming of the Shrew," produced with modern settings, modern dress, and up-to-date equipment including automobiles, had a successful run of several months. Apparently cave-man tactics applied to a woman make a subject as interesting today as it was three centuries ago. Try "Twelfth Night." Get acquainted with Sir Toby Belch, the jolly old reprobate, his companion, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, the saucy Maria, and the pompous and puritanical Malvolio. Make allowances for their differences in dress and for some details of expression and then look about you for their counterparts in our society of today. Reading such a play aloud breathes life into the pictures of history. Or you might follow the fortunes of the swashbuckling old renegade Falstaff through the adventures reported in "Henry IV, Part I" and "The Merry Wives of Windsor." The "Midsummer Night's Dream" presents gentler scenes, and the "Winter's Tale" and "The Tempest," carry you into the realm of fancy and unreality. These last contain much pure poetry and read aloud, they give indication of what the "Music of Speech" can be.

The Dramatic Circle.—But the very best way to enjoy the reading of plays is also the most entertaining and there is no loss of practice in the bargain. Buy several copies of a suitable play,⁵ and give out the parts to members of the family. Give all a chance to glance over the play beforehand, and then all read it. This old

⁵ Send to Samuel French and Company, New York City, for catalog of paper-covered editions of one-act plays. School editions of Shakespeare's plays are very cheap and will serve your purpose admirably.

practice is still a custom in some families. In many of our suburban districts, where our citizens still inhabit "houses," the custom is flourishing once more. Certainly any normal family, augmented perhaps by a few congenial neighbors or friends, can constitute a Dramatic Reading Circle for itself. Here is entertainment for all, education of a rare kind for the youngsters—and practice from which many valuable by-products result to improve the powers of the adults.

Helpful suggestions as to the detail technique of the art of reading aloud are to be found in "Interpretation of the Printed Page," by Professor S. H. Clark, late of the University of Chicago,⁶ and in "The Speaking of English Verse," by an English woman teacher and lecturer of unusual ability, Miss Elsie Fogerty.⁷

It is likely that no part of your study of speech will prove more fascinating than the actual acquaintance with literature that is built up through reading. More than this: If you have even a fair reading knowledge of another language, you can apply the technique of reading aloud to the masterpieces of that other tongue. At first you may need to use translations to help you with the original. But read the original aloud every time. The world of literature is yours; the stirring, the thoughtful, the jovial, the tragic—all the experiences that have been recorded by the masters of communication in every age.

If the ways of life's struggle have not thus far taken you where you have lived with books, you have but to make a beginning. In "Confessions of a Book-Lover," one of the last and most delightful products of his facile pen, the late Maurice Francis Egan, formerly Minister to Denmark, says this:

In fact, ladies and gentlemen, I have never read any good book that was not related intimately to at least a score of other books. It is true that in a measure a book gives to us what we take to it; and we can only take much out of it when we approach the group of ministering authors who alone make life both cheerful and endurable.

⁶ S. H. Clark, *Interpretation of the Printed Page*, Row, Petersen & Co.

⁷ Elsie Fogerty, *The Speaking of English Verse*, Dutton.

PART V

THE GENERAL PUBLIC

*He ceased; but left so charming on their ear
His voice, that listening still they seemed to hear.*
HOMER: *Odyssey* (Pope translation)

CHAPTER XXII

THE OCCASION

The Responsibility of the Competent.—A man who has attained prominence in any line of activity is almost certain to be called on to go outside his immediate circle and address general audiences, in his own town or elsewhere. His reaction, when such a call first comes, is likely to be that of surprise, even dismay. "Why," he may ask himself, "should I be asked to make a public speech? How can I do such a thing?" Perhaps, as he thinks of the inconveniences that may be involved—the time it may consume, his dislike at appearing before the public—he may add, "What have I done to be subjected to this annoyance?"

The answer is the same today as it has been in all ages. Public address, in the correct application of the term, is an obligation that rests upon the competent in every line of activity. Men of attainment do not prepare speeches on pet subjects and then go about looking for opportunities to deliver them. The events of the community's life provide an occasion. The occasion seeks a man. Perhaps you are the man.

Public Speaking in Earlier Times.—Down through the ages man has served God and his fellowmen by public address. Before the days of printing, when speech was the only means of extended communication, government as well as education was conducted by word of mouth. People lived in groups and clans that could be assembled within the reach of a single voice. Matters of importance to the community were explained orally by rulers and priests. Bards and minstrels entertained and instructed groups of the people with tales of the great deeds of the past. In Athens

pupils tarried in the famous grove to hear Aristotle. Demosthenes and other orators and statesmen spoke to the citizens in the marketplace. In Rome, Cicero, Cato, Caesar addressed senators and citizens in the Capitol and the Forum. Later, at the direction of the Master, the Christian religion was "preached" to all nations. The missionaries sent out from Rome accomplished their purpose through public address. In the Middle Ages, the founders of monasteries recruited their orders by speaking to the people. The Crusades were "preached." The talks or "lectures" of scholars developed the great universities. The leaders of the Reformation were great orators.

In the development of popular interest in political affairs, from the sixteenth century onward, public speaking played a large part. The French Revolution began in oratory. In England, in the cause of good government, Pitt, Fox and Burke raised their voices to protest against the treatment of the American colonies. In our own country the political business of early days was carried on largely through the agency of the town meeting, an assembly in which the great served the obscure, the educated explained to the commonalty the issues of the day. As numbers grew and parties developed, simple deliberation gave way to the debates of opposing groups, in legislative chamber and on public platform.

Disappearance of the "Orator."—A generation ago, however, people were saying: "The day of the speaker has passed." With the advent of inexpensive printing and postage many of the functions of the speaker had been taken over by books, magazines and newspapers. Outside of a few professions, such as the law, the ministry, and teaching, in which oral address is part of professional routine, most of the persons who attained notice as public speakers during the last few generations dealt largely in entertainment and "inspiration." The first image suggested by the term "public speaker" was likely to be that of the political spellbinder, the traveling evangelist, the platform entertainer.

Now public speaking of that sort lends itself easily to mere

exploitation of personal charm, to affectation of all kinds. One result was that many sensible, hard-headed persons came to have a very general distrust of public speaking. They did not believe in encouraging it, and personally they shunned the reputation of being public speakers. Even in the professions which naturally present ideas by word of mouth, many of the more careful and thoughtful practitioners sought to utilize rather the form of writing. College professors wrote and read their lectures; clergymen wrote and read their sermons. The attitude of mind of a generation ago is illustrated by a remark of Kipling in "A Diversity of Creatures": "When people take to talking as a business, anything may arise—anything except the facts in the case."

New Uses for an Old Art.—But with the twentieth century conditions have changed again. Society's life has become still more complex. We have found that the eye-appeal, through writing and print, is not sufficient for getting our work done. It is still true that close and intimate understanding of a matter comes to most men through listening, not through reading. In spite of the ever-cheapening printed page, much of our information still needs to be distributed by word of mouth. Beyond question, where the feelings and wills of a large number of people are concerned, the most human and most effective approach is through speech.

Accordingly, in our age of great industrial development, large-scale production, social service by numerous agencies outside the fields of church and politics, new uses have been found for society's old instrument. Executives, employees and the public want to see, and to hear, the men who are guiding the great enterprises of the modern world. The heads of great insurance companies, manufacturing and trading companies, labor unions, fraternal bodies, social service organizations like the Red Cross, the Y. M. C. A., the Federation of Women's Clubs, the American Farm Bureau, and the rest, have to spend much of their time in traveling through the country, to explain the policies and prob-

lems of their organizations to employees, members, and the public at large.

By means of the radio the range of the speaker's voice has now been increased to compass the peoples of the earth. The President of the United States takes office today in the presence of all the inhabitants of our continent.

Silent Men Finding Their Voices.—All these developments have brought renewed attention to public address. In the *New York Times* of February 15, 1925, under the caption, "Silent Men Are Finding Their Voices," Charles Willis Thompson remarked:

Andrew W. Mellon, all his life a financier, was bound by the spell of silence until recently. He was willing to write, and what he writes is forceful and cogent. But the idea of saying what he might have written apparently never entered his head. At a recent dinner of the Manufacturers' Club he was forced to his feet and rose in a state of panic. His confusion and alarm were almost funny. But once he had got into his stride he found himself forgetful of his audience and his voice, and was delivering the same clear and important ideas that he had been in the habit of writing. . . . The incident is worth noting for it is a cameo of the whole case; Mellon, in his own person illustrated in half an hour the entire history of the era of voicelessness and the present change.

Not Glibness, but Straightforward Presentation.—The type of public address demanded today is not glib or showy. It aims to present worth while ideas simply and briefly. We go to hear the views of Mr. Jones and Mr. Brown, candidates for public office, of Professor Atkinson, authority on economics, of Mr. White, state representative of the Federation of Labor; we listen to the public reports of our superintendent of schools; we buy tickets to see and hear a visiting novelist or poet; we tune in for the speeches of the Governor and the President. And when these are able and pleasing speakers, we rejoice, not so much in their skill of utterance as in the fact that a certain ability in expression which they possess has given us the chance to have direct contact

with their minds and hearts. Such speaking is among the serious concerns of civilized society. It is of the very life of the people.

The Right to Speak.—In every sphere, men of ability gain recognition largely in proportion to their power of placing their knowledge and skill at the disposal of other human beings. In addition to professional competence they have knowledge of human nature. It is this special element of competence that prepares them for the call to speak.

Out of the habit of looking into the facts and of realizing the circumstances which affect their own lives and the lives of other people, comes the grasp of affairs that makes men useful citizens. A man of such habit rarely takes an ill-proportioned view of things. His judgment is apt to be sound; the reasoning that supports it proceeds from no single and remote point of vision. He has adequate first-hand knowledge; he has sufficient detachment to use it; he can place it at the disposal of others. By reason of this flexibility of mind he often occupies a key position in his community—an able assistant of older men, an unofficial adviser to younger men. Whether or not he holds office, he has time and interest for public affairs; his influence is recognized; officials consult him; men reckon with his opinions. When a new problem confronts his community, people want to know what he thinks and when opportunity arises he speaks his mind.

Such a man is never idle. If fortune has permitted him to travel, he has not wasted his opportunities of knowing other lands and other peoples at first hand. Nor is he too indolent to think on his experiences and apply the wisdom that is their fruit to the good of his own community. Never forgetting that he is a citizen, he is ready to answer the calls upon his citizenship.

Your Own Competence.—In your own case the call to speak in public may have come either through professional or business activities, through club associations, or through the obligations of citizenship. You do not want to discredit the cause which you

have the duty of representing. You wish to do justice to the occasion which you have the honor to serve. What are you to do when the call comes to deliver a public address?

If you have acquired the habit of interest in the things that concern your club, your industry or profession, your town, you will find it easy to put yourself in the places of persons outside your own group and take stock of the affairs that concern the larger public.

With such a personal background, and with the experience probably of many informal appearances before your own business or fraternal association, the mere fact that your hearers, this time, are to be strangers need give you little uneasiness. On similar occasions you have heard many speeches by men and women whom you know. You have observed their conversation as well as analyzed their public utterances. Your memory probably contains impressions of them; what they said, how they said it, the effect. Think back over these impressions. Nor has your experience been limited to the efforts of others. In professional or business conference you have had frequent experience in stating your views, or reporting a finding. As chairman of a committee you have presented reports before your club or your professional associates. You have taken part in the discussions of the school committee, the local board of health. When you addressed the Town Hall Association, as Chairman of the Building Committee, your address ran to more than an hour. Now the way you talk to a group of acquaintances is substantially the way to talk to outsiders. Folks are folks. What is demanded of you on the present occasion is merely the adjustment to the difference in the conditions affecting the communication. Instead of talking to your own acquaintances, bound to you by ties of professional, fraternal, or local nature, you are to talk to outsiders bound to you by the ties of common humanity, common heritages of citizenship, common aspirations. Instead of talking to an audience in the familiar meeting room, council chamber, or town hall, you are to speak in an auditorium, a theatre, a hotel ballroom.

Yet an address to people with whom you are not personally acquainted presents less difficulty than might be imagined. Introduction to an individual at a social gathering is frequently followed by a lively conversation which develops into a cordial acquaintance, if not a lasting friendship. Look on the public address in this spirit. You will be introduced to your audience and the burden of the conversation will be yours. All that is demanded of you, after all, is just to *talk* to the people in front of you. In this lies mastery.

A Master of Public Address.—In frank and direct address to the whole body of citizens in the interest of the public welfare, few men have been more successful than Governor Alfred E. Smith, of New York. For a long time he has been talking to the people of his constituency, to the members of the legislature, to the citizens of his state. Now his audience is the nation. But he always talks to the human beings who compose his audience—whether explaining a provision in the constitution of his state to a legislative committee, or defending a program in a campaign, or discussing the Port Authority for a representative Wall Street audience, or gracing a commencement program in company with university presidents.

This frank directness is shown in the opening of his address in Philadelphia, May 24, 1926, at a meeting in the interest of the Handicapped and Dependent Wards of Pennsylvania. The chairman of the meeting had said in his introduction:

I am ashamed that the story that Dr. Pike has told you had to be told before one who is not a citizen of the State of Pennsylvania, but I am glad that he did present it to this audience plainly and baldly, and may I remind you again that it was no outside criticism that you were getting; it was a plain presentation of the facts. . . .

Now, when we find a situation such as this, and when we find that a neighbor has had a similar situation and has met and corrected that situation, it is only natural for us to inquire, "How did he do it?" and it is with that thought in mind that the Public Charities Association has asked the forceful and brilliant Governor of our neighboring common-

wealth to come here and tell us, not necessarily what we ought to do, but how our sister commonwealth met this same condition.

Governor Smith began thus :

Ladies and Gentlemen, Mr. Chairman, Dr. Frazier, Dr. Pike, Brother East Sider, and friends of Pennsylvania :—

It is quite unnecessary to make any apology for being obliged to lay before this audience in my presence the conditions that obtain in the institutions of the State of Pennsylvania. No matter how bad they are it would be very difficult for them to be worse than in my own State of New York, and while I listened to Dr. Pike I could almost imagine that he was speaking about the prisons and hospitals of the State of New York. It is because there is pending for passage in your Senate, a provision to amend your Constitution to bond the State for \$50,000,000 that we are gathered here to-night in order that there may be a general understanding of what the thing is all about.

People are naturally conservative. People don't like to roll up against the Commonwealth or a municipality of a State, any burden of debt that has to be met probably by the next generation, in part if not wholly, and therefore they desire to have an understanding of the whole subject before they are prepared to agree to the issue of bonds or any other evidence of indebtedness. I am satisfied that when the people of a great State have a thorough understanding of just what the money is to be used for, they are ready and prepared to carry the burden of indebtedness that it means and they are ready and prepared to expend it, because public indignation arises only against the wasted dollar and not against the public dollar which is properly expended.

Bryce on Citizenship.—In the first of a series of lectures at Yale in 1909, later published by the Yale University Press, the late Lord Bryce said :

Besides the civic duties already described of Fighting, Voting, and Thinking, there is another duty. It is the duty of Mutual Help, the duty incumbent on those who possess, through their knowledge and intelligence, the capacity of Instruction and Persuasion to advise and to guide their less competent fellow citizens. No sensible man ought ever to have supposed that under such conditions as large modern communities present, the bulk of the citizens could vote wisely from their own private knowledge and intelligence. Even in small cities such as was Sicyon in the days of Aratus, or Boston in the days of James Otis, the Average Man needed the help of his more educated and wiser neighbors. While com-

munities remained small it was easy to get this help. But now, the swift and vast growth of cities has changed everything. Private talk counts for less when the richer citizens dwell apart from the poorer; their opportunities for meeting are fewer; there is less friendliness, if also less dependence, in the relation of the employed to the employer.¹

¹ James Bryce, *Hindrances to Good Citizenship*, Yale University Press.

CHAPTER XXIII

GETTING READY TO SPEAK

The Obligation to Prepare.—What you say to the general audience may have greater significance than the word you address to the smaller circle of your immediate acquaintance. You want to be very sure of what you say; sure of its soundness; sure of its clearness and coherence. To assure yourself, you prepare.

Do not think that the virtuous act of writing is proper preparation. There is a fundamental difference between preparing a speech and preparing a written article or essay. With an article a large part of the preparation has to go to the process of composition, which in that case means writing out what you have to say. According to the habit and the ability of the writer the process of composition may be completed at a sitting, or may extend over days or weeks, but there is practically always a stage of deliberate revision in which you slowly fashion the thought into just the form you desire. But the composition of a speech takes place in the presence of the audience. The speech itself, the words and phrases you employ, should be the product of the moment as they are in conversation. It is reported that on one occasion Professor George H. Palmer, the husband of Alice Freeman Palmer, the first president of Wellesley College and a leader among American women, was much disturbed by his wife's apparent inattention to an important address she was to make. To satisfy her husband she sat down and wrote it out. The result was the worst address in her whole career.

Nevertheless, making a good speech must always involve preparation, and of a most painstaking kind. It involves getting ready to speak; getting a view of the factors that will enable

you to meet the demands of the occasion; mentally determining and arranging what you have to say.

Impromptu Words but Deliberate Thought.—You have been asked to speak because people think you have something worth while to say; something related to a certain subject or suited to a certain occasion. But what you know and think is within your own mind, tucked away in terms of your own perceptions. It is not ready and labeled for transfer. You cannot, offhand, make clear to an audience just what it is that you think. Actual impromptu speaking, getting up to talk on a subject without having thought it through, is almost always disastrous. The last thing you learned may come forth without proper assimilation. Or, spurred by the desperation of the moment, you may seize upon reminiscences which have a definite relation to the subject but which are not at all the appropriate materials for the occasion.

A well-known business man who is a very popular speaker was invited by a friend, a practical joker, to spend a week-end at his country home. A pleasant rail journey in the company of his friend brought him to a town of fair size, where within a few feet of the station he was ushered directly to the platform in a big tent and introduced at once to an audience of several thousands, assembled for a Sunday School Convention. In his own words, he “floundered about and finally told a number of experiences with Sunday schools as a boy, that were not at all suited to that gathering.”

This experience of an accomplished speaker serves to show that facility of talk cannot relieve one of the labor of preparation. Nor does the experience of great speakers, in so far as it has been reported, give us any reason to think that actual preparation may be neglected.

How Great Speakers Prepare.—The evidence, wherever we find it, shows that great speakers are careful to prepare thor-

oughly. Gladstone once remarked that he did not prepare his speeches unless it might be some peculiarly important and delicate announcement on foreign affairs. Joseph Chamberlain, however, founder of the Unionist party, questioned Sir Edward Hamilton, Gladstone's private secretary, about this, and Sir Edward answered, "If he means that he does not sit down and write, I dare say it is true; but he lies on a sofa and 'wombles' it in his inside. And I'll tell you this, Mr. Chamberlain, none of us likes to go near him the day before he makes a great speech."

The quotation is taken from an article by Joseph Chamberlain's son, Sir Austin Chamberlain, on "How Great Speakers Prepare Their Speeches," which appeared in an English magazine, the *Empire Review*, in December, 1924. The author, himself a distinguished statesman and a speaker of note, shows that while each of the great English speakers discussed pursued his own method, all of them prepared their speeches with utmost care, that the preparation was labor undisguised. Here is the last paragraph of the article:

With this account of my father's (Joseph Chamberlain's) methods, I have carried my theme as far as my knowledge goes. No set rule emerges from the examination that I have made. Each speaker has his own method,—often more than one. One man makes elaborate notes; another makes none. One man writes his speeches, another never puts pen to paper. We may choose what system we like, or have no system at all, and we can still find some model to justify our practice. But one conclusion, I think, stands out clearly—that those who say to public men, "Oh, speaking is no trouble to you," have not seen them in the hours of preparation. Their wives and their private secretaries tell a different tale.

Discover Your Own Method.—You have to get a view of your own thought before you can tell it to others. You know there is no universally recognized method. You have to go back into your own mind. What you want is to discover your own way to "womble."

To place himself in the universe, René Descartes, the great French philosopher, before beginning his epoch-making "Dis-

course upon Method," resorted to reflection. The results of that attempt at individual orientation changed the process of philosophic thought and established the "scientific method." Until you have tried your power of reflection for a purpose, you do not know the marvelous energy of the human mind. Consider what happens. You have a speech to make. You begin to think about it. Subconsciously the mind ranges back in search of ideas through the storehouses of memory, turning the flashlight of imagination upon odd fractions of thought laid away by experience long years before, upon the origins of certain of your prejudices, the beginnings of certain interests, the fresh recollections of yesterday.

When you actually get under way in your effort to meet the responsibility of speaking, you will find that the mind enters into an intense activity. Your reflection is not a mere backward glance, it becomes a review. You find that you are taking a survey, an inventory of the mind for the purpose of setting aside materials that may be useful for the end you have in view.

Getting Started.—First of all, therefore, when you have to make a speech, let your mind run. Think about the subject. You are to engage in a mental effort that will discover for you not only what you are to say, but also to some extent how you are to say it. You look for the thought that is to form the substance of your speech, and the ideas that are to help you to present it to other minds. The process is highly individual, complex, and made up of many intangible elements. It is possible here to touch upon only the common pathways of the mind.

Suppose your subject is already determined and you have, say, three weeks' notice for your next speech. Get to work at once. A practice that is often helpful is that of taking a long walk in the country or in a quiet part of the town—or if you prefer, just sitting quietly in your library or den—and turning the whole subject over in your mind. Get a detached view. Climb a tree, so to speak, and look over the landscape.

Notebooks.—If it will help you, use a notebook. A section of a loose-leaf memo book will do, or a few cards in an envelope. Jot down the impressive ideas that occur to you. You will be surprised at what results from five or ten minutes of actual concentration. Conscious attention to the matter may have to be brief, but the subconscious stream you have started will continue to function. Additional thoughts will come to you at odd times, in a street-car, on a bus, in a railway station. Jot them down. When an interval of pause in the day's engagements gives you a chance, look over your notes. In some ideas you will see new elements, in others, clues to further thought.

Considering Your Audience.—After a day or two, during which you give to the subject such meditation as your day's routine permits, it is well to give some thought to the nature of your problem, as well as to the material available. What is the situation that confronts you? Who are to compose your audience? How many will be present? What is it that brings them together? What are their ages? Their sex? Such matters are not always mentioned in the invitation, but it is important to find out through inquiry from friends, or through correspondence with the representative or group that issued the invitation. Spare yourself the chance of a dismal experience such as that related by the president of a leading manufacturing establishment, in the *American Magazine* for September, 1923. It seems that he was once invited to speak in a town which was distant from his own city, and of which he had no knowledge. The invitation was from strangers. He assumed that he was to speak to the usual town gathering of several hundreds and prepared his speech. Upon arrival he found himself the guest at dinner of a society of seven members. With no time to revise his thought, he delivered what he had prepared. The evening was a failure. But the speaker learned his lesson. In his own words, "Now I look ahead I know who they are, how many are to hear me I even get the local paper to know something about the town."

Not only is it possible to learn something about the people who are to hear you, but you may even be able to calculate their state of mind. For you may learn of events or circumstances that have affected them. Attention to this element of the situation will save you from the embarrassment of a prominent gentleman, a candidate for public office, who, in addressing a college audience the day after a decisive defeat at the hands of their traditional football rival, made an unfortunate bid for favor by mentioning the game in a way that showed utter ignorance of the very recent cause for campus gloom.

Considering Yourself.—Next, it is well to consider your own place in the situation: "Who am I, the speaker? What am I to these, my hearers? Am I an imposing official figure? I must show that I am a human being. Am I to be adviser in a great enterprise? I must be worthy of their trust. Do I come from a great city to speak to a small town? I ought to show that the skyscrapers have not shut off my view. Am I the chief speaker on the program, or do I hold a subordinate place? And what is my purpose in addressing these people?"

If by some such means as this you clear up in your own mind the relationships of audience and speaker, you find a guiding principle to help you in the search for thoughts that will make a good speech and ideas that will provide the adjustments demanded by this form of communication.

Adjusting Your Ideas.—To find such thoughts and ideas you resume your reflections and meditations. In view of the situation as you now see it, certain notions will impress you as of less worth than before. Others you will wish to elaborate. Your knowledge of certain facts you may wish to enlarge. You may wish to test an opinion you think of presenting—somewhat as you have tested your opinions at club meetings before presenting them. Introduce the subject into conversations. Let others deal with it. Take note of their ideas and their reactions. In

this way you not only check the soundness of your own thought, but you often obtain new and unexpected views of the subject. You will probably experience little difficulty in finding the material of your speech. But you must not neglect the indirect turns of thought that will furnish you with ideas suitable for the adjustments you have to make.

Personal Experience—A Head-Master's Address.—In an address at the dedication of Founders' Hall, Loomis Institute, at Windsor, Connecticut, November 4, 1916, the head-master, in preparing the minds of his audience for the explanation of the aims and purposes of the Institute that was to follow, pointed to the changes in environment that require additional provisions in schools, by reference to his own boyhood. His speech began thus :

The purpose of education is to fit the individual to live happily and efficiently in his environment. To that end training in manual skill and in the observational sciences, through which all the great advances of civilization have come, is essential. But the schools have never given adequate attention to this phase of education. I wish to point out why the neglect of the schools mattered little in the past, and how conditions seem to me to have changed. As a schoolboy in a New England town of moderate size, I learned to use tools from a particularly skilful cabinet-maker who did not mind boys about his shop, printing in my grandfather's newspaper office, and enough of pattern making in a nearby foundry so that I could case a twelve pound lead sphere for shot putting. I did not myself care for agricultural pursuits, but many of my friends kept chickens or cultivated gardens, and we all knew pretty well, if not in strictly pedagogical fashion, mechanical processes and natural history. Today the town has grown to be a considerable manufacturing city, there are fewer open spaces, the conditions of industry have changed, machines have taken the place of handwork, the efficiency man has speeded up the operatives; and I fear if I were to go back I should find the sign "No admittance" on the doors of my boyhood paradise. The same fate has befallen many a schoolboy of today. . . .

Secretary Davis.—It may be that a recollection of your own experience will present you with an admirable "link of adjustment." This was the case with the Honorable James J. Davis,

Secretary of Labor, who began his address before the Industrial Accident Prevention Conference, called by him, on July 14, 1926, with these words:

Gentlemen: In welcoming you to Washington I speak with sincerity and warmth such as I have seldom felt before. From the days when I was an ironworker and saw men at my side killed or injured, I have had at heart this question of cutting down the toll of accidents in American industry. For months I have had this conference in view. Now it gratifies me to see the representatives of so many States, so many organizations, alike filled with a zeal for preventing industrial accidents.

Reference to Literature—President Taft.—The classical allusion in the name of the Lotos Club furnished William Howard Taft, then President and now Chief Justice of the United States, with an idea for adjustment, in his address at the Club dinner in New York, November 16, 1912, a few days after he had been defeated for reelection to the Presidency. In characteristically genial fashion he began:

Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Lotos Club: The legend of the lotos eaters was that if they partook of the fruit of the lotos tree they forgot what had happened in their country and were left in a state of philosophic calm in which they had no desire to return to it.

I do not know what was in the mind of your distinguished Invitation Committee when I was asked to attend this banquet. They came to me before the election. At first I hesitated to come, lest, when the dinner came, by the election I should be shorn of interest as a guest and be changed from an active and virile participant in the day's doings of the nation to merely a dissolving view.

I knew that generally on an occasion of this sort the motive of the diners was to have a guest whose society should bring them more closely into contact with the great present and future, and not be merely a reminder of what has been. But after further consideration, I saw in the name of your club, the possibility that you were not merely cold, selfish seekers after pleasures of your own; that perhaps you were organized to furnish consolation to those who mourn, oblivion to those who would forget, an opportunity for a swan song to those about to disappear.

This thought, prompted by the coming as one of your committee, of the gentleman who knows everything in the world that has happened and

is going to happen, and especially that which is going to happen, by reason of his control of the Associated Press, much diminished my confidence in the victory that was to come on election day. I concluded that it was just as well to cast an anchor to the windward and accept as much real condolence as I could gather in such a hospitable presence as this, and, therefore, my friends, I accepted your invitation and am here. . . .

Booker T. Washington at Atlanta.—Booker T. Washington, in the middle of a plea for his race delivered at the opening of the Cotton States and International Exposition at Atlanta, September 18, 1895, turned to two memorable phrases from the great poet of the English-speaking race, to illumine a truth :

There is no defense or security for any of us except in the highest intelligence and development of all. If anywhere there are efforts tending to curtail the fullest growth of the Negro, let these efforts be turned into stimulating, encouraging, and making him the most useful and intelligent citizen. Efforts or means so invested will pay a thousand percent interest. These efforts will be twice blessed—"blessing him that gives and him that takes."

There is no escape through law of man or God from the inevitable:—

"The laws of changeless justice bind
Oppressor with oppressed;
And close as sin and suffering joined
We march to fate abreast."

Nearly sixteen millions of hands will aid you in pulling the load upwards, or they will pull against you the load downwards. We shall constitute one third and much more of the ignorance and crime of the South, or one third its intelligent and progress; we shall contribute one third to the business and industrial prosperity of the South or we shall prove a veritable body of death, stagnating, depressing every effort to advance the body politic. . . .

Do not fear that such preparation for delivering a speech involves becoming a recluse for the week or two preceding the effort on the platform. The time given consciously to the subject may be very little. What actually happens is that the subject lies there in your mind, "on the back of the stove." Your ideas

grow and clarify themselves gradually, and in large measure unconsciously.

Assembling Your Material.—After several days of this meditation, relieved by little excursions of consultation, take a solid hour or two for the definite task of jotting down all your ideas on the subject.

Take a number of library cards, 3 by 5 inches, from the supply which you probably keep on hand, and sit down to your task. Put down on the first card, in a single short but complete sentence, the first thing that comes into your mind on the subject. Use the second card for the next idea. Work on in this way, one idea to a card, without regard for the sequence. You are getting a record of the contents of your mind on the subject. Do not stop to weigh and consider. As you work on, the thoughts will come faster and faster. Two hours will pass quickly enough if you are interested and moderately well informed on the subject. When the pace slackens definitely, take out your notebook and record on cards any ideas not already in the pile. In the 100 or 200 cards you have written, you have a catalog of your ideas on the subject.

Analyzing Your Material.—Now take the pile of cards and spread them out on the table. Play solitaire with them. Sort them for repetitions, for associated ideas, for different phases of the same point, for contrasts, for other relationships. Common sense will tell you to discard duplications, to retain variations, to fix upon a scheme for grouping.

When you have made the first grouping, take each little package of four or five cards and study it for a moment or two. Then write out on another card a short sentence summarizing the ideas, and clip it to the package. This process will result in perhaps forty to fifty little packages, each with a summarizing sentence.

Organizing Your Material.—The packages you now have at hand represent your ideas assembled according to immediate re-

lationships. Now combine packages in the same way. Clip together the combinations with another summarizing sentence for the top of each new package. Continue the game. You will reduce the number of packages until at last you have one pile, bearing a summary sentence which expresses the chief idea of the thought represented in the whole set of cards.

As it is now constituted, the pack of cards contains an organization of the ideas you had on the subject at the time you made the record. It is an easy task now to transfer the outline existing on the summary cards to the customary form on a sheet of paper. The summary sentence of the entire pack is the "text" of your discourse—the idea you have to convey. The summaries of the larger packages are the key sentences of the main divisions of the idea. Under each of these you will set down in order the summaries of the next smaller packages as the significant statements of the subdivisions. There will be further subdivisions down to the individual cards.

The outline represents what you have at hand in the way of material for your speech. From this you may choose what you think will serve your purpose with the audience of the occasion, within the time at your disposal. You have now a summary of your material, and a tentative plan of presentation.

Seasoned Thought.—After all, however, your notes if you make them, and your game of solitaire with cards, are but mechanical means of working the mind. It is the week or month of "mulling" over the subject—a few minutes at a time, of course—that cures or seasons the thought. By regarding ideas many times from different angles, you come to know them in all their elements. You see relationships that did not at first appear. You acquire at comparative leisure the information that may be needed for complete grasp of this or that point. As knowledge increases, the state of mind induced by meditation becomes more productive. In its superactivity the mind detects implications that might otherwise escape it. It is in the intervals of intense concentration, per-

haps, that the "inspiration" of a later moment has its origin. The happy thought that gives you an admirable theme for your speech may take form in the mind at an odd moment apparently without effort. But it is no accident. It is the reward of labor "pre-paid."

The Substance of a Speech.—The summary of your material and the tentative plan mentioned do not by any means constitute the end of your labors. But the rest of the way is easier. You turn now to the modification and development of the theme for the minds of the particular audience that is to hear your speech. You seek to adjust your theme, to determine the "line" of your speech. From the materials assembled you make a further selection, eliminating all that will not, with some degree of certainty, serve your purpose with this audience, in the time at your disposal.

Economy in Presentation.—In developing a theme for the minds of others in a public gathering, remember not to try to cover too much. The audience has no great interest in the time and effort that went into the preparation of your material. You have been thinking closely on the matters you are to present. The members of the audience have not. You have now the task of selecting the four or five points that can be properly established in the minds of your hearers with the desired effect, in the twenty to forty minutes of their time which are at your disposal. You have to consult the wants of the audience. They cannot warn you; they cannot protest. If you do not serve their needs, you fail.

Testing the Substance of the Speech.—Try out the material you have decided to use. The best possible way to do this is to get up on your feet, in your own room, and talk the subject through in definite words. Imagine the audience. Talk straight through, using the words that come. Try to employ your various key thoughts, according to plan, and keep track of the time. It is a method followed by multitudes of successful speakers. With practice it becomes easy.

Or, you can dictate the speech to a stenographer and then listen carefully as it is read back to you. Or you can dictate it to a machine, just talking it straight through, and when you have finished, put on the reproducer, turn back, and listen to what you have uttered. The instrument will reveal the full effect of thought, diction and utterance. In either case you ought to have a transcription made. Study it. How far does it represent your thought? How far would this version serve your purpose? When you have read it, put it aside—or destroy it.

If the speech is very important, the result a matter of moment, you may wish to get the approval of a trusted friend as Disraeli was wont to do, according to Austin Chamberlain: "In preparing the few speeches of importance which he delivered outside Parliament he often made use of a highly original method; he privately rehearsed them, either in whole or in part, to an experienced reporter of the *Times*, J. F. Neilson, in whom he placed especial trust." Chamberlain reports of John Bright, that he was accustomed to try in conversation the effect of his arguments and sometimes even certain of his phrases. When Lincoln was getting ready for the inauguration in 1861, he wrote the address before coming to Washington and submitted it for criticism to men whose judgment he trusted, and by whose criticisms he profited. Finally, he sought Seward's opinion. Seward approved "the strong and conclusive argument," but thought that "some words of affection, some of calm and cheerful confidence, should be added."

Therefore, when you have in hand a speech that is of importance to you, seek the kind offices of a friend. You can reciprocate on occasion. If you add this step to your preparation you will be sure of what you have to say when you face the audience and you will know somewhat definitely how to say it with effect.

The Effort Warranted.—As will be readily seen, the habit of an orderly and careful preparation leads to an effective technique. Its application develops a capacity for mental activity that

makes for much better speeches, if not for the abolition of labor in their preparation. What you seek is not escape from labor of preparation, but rather, greater return on the labor put forth; a more effective address. When you gain great experience you may fashion your speech as can Newton D. Baker, for example, while you sit upon the platform, but your effort will make up in intensity for what it lacks in time.

Whenever the call comes to speak it will demand your full powers, your best technique. No mere tossing off will serve. It is something of importance that you are called upon by others to do. The call is for the best that your sincere and constructive mental effort can give. In some ways your task is like that of the surgeon who performs a familiar operation. His technique or mastery is the same; but each operation is a special effort, made with all his skill.¹

¹ You will find helpful discussion of the problems of speech preparation in "Public Speaking," by Professor James A. Winans of Dartmouth College, published by the Century Company; and "Purposive Speaking," by Professor Robert West of the University of Wisconsin, published by the Macmillan Company.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE SPEECH ITSELF ¹

The Approach to the Minds of the Hearers.—Your preparation is completed. By a method suited to your own mind, you have gathered and sifted material. You have given thought also to the way in which you will present your thought contribution. And in the interval on the platform before your turn comes to speak, or in the committee room before you go to the platform, you think more definitely of the opening, the immediate approach to the minds of your hearers.

The sentence or two by means of which you actually set before your audience the subject of your speech, usually forms only the last part of the introduction. Most speakers find it advisable to employ a method of easy approach, establishing contact with the minds of the audience by presenting first a matter of trivial importance to cover the inevitable "tuning in." For the average audience likes to be put in motion "on a siding" so to speak, before being switched to the "through track."

There are very practical reasons for this. The public address is delivered to a general audience of which a large proportion, if not the whole body, is frequently unacquainted with the speaker. It is delivered in a public hall or auditorium not altogether familiar to speaker or hearers. The audience has "to settle down." The speaker wishes that "settling down" to be in the direction of his thought. A few introductory remarks, therefore, serve to cover the mental and emotional approach of the audience to attention and concentration. The speaker, personally, is no

¹ In addition to the books by Winans and West mentioned in the preceding chapter, the reader will find a matured and thoughtful discussion of this subject in "Public Speaking," by the late Professor I. L. Winter of Harvard, published by the Macmillan Company.

less well served by this device for it gives him a slow and easy start, allowing him to adjust his voice to the hall, and giving him an opportunity to survey the audience.

Extemporizing an Introduction.—Some speakers give no thought to the preliminary remarks of the introduction until they arrive in the hall and see the audience before them, trusting to the “inspiration of the moment” as some of them are wont to call it. Actually, of course, it is not inspiration, but swift and accurate thinking. These men have a knack of gleanings from the occasion a circumstance or relationship that serves to arrest the attention of the audience.

Advantages of the Prepared Introduction.—For men of little experience on the platform, however, this practice is not to be recommended. There is a more certain way. The possibility of an “inspiration” by no means excuses failure to prepare introductory material on any occasion. The very thought of this preparation made, this duty done, has a material effect on the state of mind of the speaker when he enters the hall. He cannot afford to face the uncertainty of a chance beginning until he has become quite sure of himself. Even then he may prefer to have one ready which he may discard if the flash of a moment happens to supply him with a better one.

The confidence and assurance resulting from careful preparation in this particular more than pays for the labor involved in wresting from an odd corner of the mind, or accepting from the convenient body of reviewed fact, some one thought that will serve to arrest the attention of the audience. For on most occasions, when the speaker rises the audience is severally apart. One individual is engaged with a financial problem of the morrow, another is reflecting on some household need, others are on the golf course, in the Alps, at sea, in flight to Paris,—the speaker has to call them to his side.

Finding an Introductory Device.—The time to consider the

introduction is after the speech itself is planned and organized, after the concluding element has been thought out. The leading or truly introductory sentence will not be difficult to formulate. But the preliminary statements, the approach element must be sought. Summon up a picture of the audience on the occasion at which you are to speak. Feel their presence. Reflect on the relationships involved. Recall the rest of the program, if you know it. Go over the happenings of the day or week, read the invitation again, or recall the conversation you had with the committee that issued the invitation. You will be sure to find something worthy of use for arresting the attention of the audience, and of a nature that lends itself to the merely incidental purpose of "approach."

Revealing the Attitude of the Speaker.—In September, 1917, Otto H. Kahn, of German birth, and conspicuous for his service to this nation in many ways before and since, spoke on the obligations involved in the oath of citizenship, before the Chamber of Commerce in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, to an audience of German ancestry, among whom the German language was extensively spoken. This persuasive appeal addressed to citizens of foreign birth was very effective. It began thus:

I speak as one who has seen the spirit of the Prussian governing class at work from close by, having at its disposal and using to the full practically every agency for molding the public mind.

I have watched it proceed with relentless persistency and profound cunning to instil into the nation the demoniacal obsession of power-worship and world-dominion, to modify and pervert the mentality—indeed the very fibre and moral substance—of the German people, a people which, until misled, corrupted and systematically poisoned by the Prussian ruling class, was, and deserved to be, an honored, valued and welcome member of the family of nations.

I have hated that spirit ever since it came within my ken many years ago; hated it all the more as I saw it ruthlessly pulling down a thing that was dear to me—the old Germany to which I was linked by ties of blood, by fond memories, and cherished sentiments.

An Observation on the Occasion.—The “Farewell to the Graduating Class,” by President Edwin A. Alderman, of the University of Virginia, in 1920, illustrates a manner of introduction to an audience well acquainted with the speaker, where all signs were set for attention. Consciousness of recent events, of the sensibilities of the members of the audience addressed and of his own relationship to the event, is revealed not only in the material of this introduction, but in the very words and phrases also:

There are some events and some emotions that can never become quite commonplace. The reddening of the autumn leaves and the green tide of oncoming springtime in the natural world are perpetual miracles. In the world of spirit, the going over the top of trained, undaunted, and unbeaten youth to face the duties and meet the perils of life's real battles can never become prosaic. And that is why, as the years roll on, this particular scene and this particular duty do not become stereotyped to us who serve at these altars. The mere scene indeed may be ever fresh, dynamic, and dramatic, as in bright recurring waves, year by year, they break on the shores of manhood.

My heart is thus newly stirred each year to find and to say a fitting word to you, young soldiers of the Common Good, at the moment of your civic zero hour. Two primary emotions always rule my mind and spirit at this hour, and I cannot fight away from them. One impulse is to tell you simply that your University has faith in you and cherishes you; and the other is, after the ancient and sometimes fatuous habit of age, to offer you what age deems good counsel. I sometimes doubt if you quite get the one, for the Anglo-Saxon is a bit tongue-tied and lacks the clarity and felicity of the Gaul, for instance, where his heart is involved; and even the other—the good counsel—may miss its mark as the counsel of dull prudence from those who are weary, to the splendor of life at the dawn.

Reasons for Speaking.—Often the requirements of a situation are most adequately satisfied by telling of the speaker's reasons for speaking, or for speaking at this time and on this subject to this audience, or for speaking on this subject and not another. Speeches of all ages reveal this as a highly satisfactory form of adjustment. Remarks of this nature, couched in care-

ful terms, result in an impression of modesty and courtesy and a bond of sympathy somewhat personal, even intimate.

This type of "approach," in very complete form, was employed by the Rt. Hon. Reginald McKenna, Chairman of the London Joint City and Midland Bank, when he addressed the American Bankers Association Convention in New York, October 4, 1922. In offering his opinion on the economic aspects of world debts, first he revealed to the audience his own course of thought in arriving at the choice of his subject:

When I received the honor of your invitation, which I greatly appreciated, I must confess I had many misgivings. I knew it would not be a light task to address an audience whose collective importance in the world of finance is unrivalled. I remembered, however, the cordial friendship which has always existed between American and British bankers, and as I realized that your invitation was a further evidence of this friendship my hesitation gave way and I gladly decided to come.

Let me begin with an explanation of my choice of subject. I thought at first that some professional topic should be selected, but I soon came across a serious difficulty. There is a much greater difference between the law and practice of banking in America and England than is generally supposed, and I felt that I should be liable to be misunderstood unless this difference were constantly borne in mind. This very meeting will illustrate the point. I understand that there are over 30,000 separate banks in the United States, a large number of which are represented here. In the whole of Great Britain we have only thirty-nine. But with us the branch system is so highly developed that these few banks have no less than 9,650 branches of which 6,800 belong to five banks alone.

The main distinction is that our banks are regarded by the Legislature as ordinary corporations or companies, while yours are subject to special legislation in regard to nearly all their activities

We differ also in our central bank policies

The principles of sound banking are the same everywhere, but our countries diverge in law and practice. . . .

With these thoughts in mind I found it very difficult to select a professional banking subject for discussion today. However careful I might be I felt that, unless accompanied by much tedious explanation, my language, associated with ideas related to English practice, would be liable to be misunderstood by you whose associated ideas are so different. I resolved therefore to pass over professional banking topics and

to look for a subject of general interest to the business community. What should this be?

In their report to the Reparation Commission, the Bankers Committee which sat early this summer in Paris, laid stress on the need to resume normal trade conditions between countries and to stabilize exchanges, and they came to the conclusion that neither of these aims could be accomplished without a definite settlement of the reparation and other international debts. Here then, it seemed to me was a subject for my address. There will be general agreement that there is no matter of more deep concern to the world's trade at the present time than reparation payments and international debts, and I trust therefore you will not deem it out of place that I have chosen this subject of discussion today.

There are two preliminary observations which I must make. My first is that I speak as a banker expressing my personal views. I have nothing to do with politics and I do not appear here in any representative character. I approach the question solely from the economic point of view and my endeavor is to determine, so far as I can, the limit of the debtor's capacity to pay, and the effect of payment on the world's trade. . . .

My second observation is to meet a possible criticism. How can I, a member of a nation which is one of the debtors of the United States, speak freely to an American audience upon international indebtedness? . . .

I recognize that these are objections which I must answer and I believe that I can do so conclusively. In the course of my argument I shall show that England has the ability to pay, and, once that is established, I can unhesitatingly assert her determination to honor her bond in full. I believe I am justified in asking you to treat England's debt to the United States as certain to be provided for, and if this be conceded, we shall be free to consider the question of the remaining international debts as one in which America and England are equally concerned and in which both have the same interest as creditors. . . .

Why Demosthenes Spoke.—Speaking to the citizens of Athens over two thousand years ago, Demosthenes told why he spoke, and why at that moment, in the opening sentences of the first of his famous "Philippics."

Had we been gathered together, Athenians, on some new subject of debate, I had waited till most of your counsellors had declared their opinions. If then I had approved of what they proposed, I should have continued silent; if not I should then have attempted to speak my senti-

ments. But since those very points on which these speakers have oft times been heard already, are at this time to be considered, though I have arisen first, I presume I may expect your pardon; for if on former occasions they had advised the proper measures, you would not have found it necessary to take counsel now.

First, then, Athenians, however wretched the situation of our affairs at present may seem, it must not by any means be thought desperate. What I am now going to advance may possibly appear a paradox; yet it is certain truth, that our past misfortunes afford a circumstance most favorable to our future hopes. And what is that? Just this; that our present difficulties are owing entirely to our total indolence and utter disregard of our own interest. For were we thus situated, in spite of effort which our duty demanded, then indeed we might regard our fortunes as absolutely desperate. But look you, Philip hath conquered only your supineness and inactivity; the state he hath not conquered. You cannot be said to be defeated; your force hath never been exerted.

The same character of dignified deference marks the first eight paragraphs of Edmund Burke's great speech on "Conciliation with America." This speech, known to the struggles of many generations of American schoolboys, is probably somewhere on your book shelves. You ought to read it again—as a speech.

Why Lloyd George Was Glad to Speak.—The significance of the circumstance that calls for the speech may very well supply the approach. This was the case when David Lloyd George addressed the gathering at the American Club in London, April 12, 1917. The prime minister's first words were:

I am in the happy position, I think, of being the first British Minister of the Crown, who, speaking on behalf of the people of this country, can salute the American Nation as comrades in arms. I am glad; I am proud. I am glad not merely because of the stupendous resources which this great nation will bring to the succor of the alliance, but I rejoice as a democrat that the advent of the United States into this war gives the final stamp and seal to the character of the conflict as a struggle against military autocracy throughout the world.

Grady—A Significant Quotation.—References to what others have said, either recalling merely the gist of the utterance, or quoting verbatim, often provide highly satisfactory forms of in-

trodition, at once complete and compact. Two interesting examples are found in speeches which have a relationship that is evident in the few words from each that we are able to quote here. On December 21, 1886, Henry W. Grady, a young editor from Georgia, delivered a speech at the dinner of the New England Society in New York. His first sentences were:

"There was a South of slavery and secession—that South is dead. There is a South of union and freedom—that South, thank God, is living, breathing, growing every hour." These words, delivered from the immortal lips of Benjamin H. Hill, at Tammany Hall, in 1866, true then, and truer now, I shall make my text to-night.

In speaking to the toast with which you have honored me, I accept the term, "The New South" as in no sense disparaging to the old. Dear to me, sir, is the home of my childhood and the traditions of my people. I would not, if I could, dim the glory they won in peace and war, or by word or deed take aught from the splendor and grace of their civilization, never equalled, and perhaps never to be equalled in its chivalric strength and grace. There is a new South, because of new conditions, new adjustments, and, if you please, new ideas and aspirations.

Dr. Talmadge has drawn for you with a master's hand the picture of your returning armies. He has told you how, in the pomp and circumstance of war, they came back to you, marching with proud and victorious tread, reading their glory in a nation's eyes! Will you bear with me while I tell you of another army that sought its home at the close of the late war—an army that marched home in defeat and not in victory—in pathos and not in splendor, but in glory that equalled yours, and to hearts as loving as ever welcomed heroes home? Let me picture to you the foot-sore Confederate soldier, as, buttoning up in his faded gray jacket, the parole which was to bear testimony to his children of his fidelity and faith, he turned his face southward from Appomatox in April, 1865. . . .

Watterson—A Recollection.—On December 22, 1894, Henry W. Watterson, the distinguished editor of the Louisville *Courier Journal*, spoke at the eighty-ninth annual dinner of the New England Society in New York, on "The Puritan and the Cavalier," beginning in this manner:

Mr. President and Gentlemen: Eight years ago, to-night, there stood, where I am standing now, a young Georgian, who, not without reason,

recognized the "significance" of his presence here—"the first Southerner to speak at this board"—a circumstance, let me add, not very creditable to any of us—and in words whose eloquence I cannot hope to recall, appealed from the New South to New England for a united country.

He was my disciple, my protege, my friend. He came to me from the Southern schools, where he had perused the arts of oratory and letters, to get a few hints in journalism, as he said; needing so few, indeed, that, but a little later, I sent him to one of the foremost journalists of this foremost city, bearing a letter of introduction, which described him as "the greatest boy ever born in Dixie, or anywhere else."

He is gone now. But, short as his life was, its heaven-born mission was fulfilled; the dream of his childhood was realized; for he had been appointed by God to carry a message of peace on earth, good-will to men, and, this done, he vanished from the sight of mortal eyes, even as the dove from the ark.

I mean to take up the word where Grady left it off, but I shall continue the sentence with a somewhat larger confidence, and perhaps with a somewhat fuller meaning; because notwithstanding the Puritan trappings, traditions, and associations which surround me—visible illustrations of the self denying fortitude of the Puritan character and the somber simplicity of the Puritan taste and habit—I never felt less out of place in my life. . . .

A Reference to a Previous Speaker.—The speaker may refer to words of poets, orators, statesmen, teachers, long dead, or to the remarks of others who have just spoken from the very platform on which the speaker rises. In a speech before the New York Chamber of Commerce, May 12, 1917, Sir Arthur Balfour, head of the British Mission to the United States began thus :

Mr. President, Gentlemen of the Chamber : The noble words to which we have just listened struck, I am convinced, a sympathetic chord in the heart of every one in your audience, but I don't think that in all the multitude gathered here to-day there was one to whom they meant more than to myself. Mr. President, I have had as the dream of my life, a hope that before I died the union between the English-speaking, freedom-loving branches of the human race should be drawn far closer than in the past, and that all temporary causes of difference which may ever have separated two great peoples would be seen in true and just proportion, and that we should realize, on whatever side of the Atlantic fortune had placed us, that the things wherein we have differed in the past sink

into absolute insignificance compared with those vital agreements which at all times, but never at such a time as at the present, unite us in one great spiritual whole.

"Funny Stories."—Some men will tell you that "All you have to do is to tell a funny story, that will give the audience a laugh, and then you can 'go right on.'" The audience may laugh, and you can go "right on," but will the audience go with you? It is a most unsafe method. A passion for telling funny stories can be indulged at less critical times. Even if the story pleases the audience—and there is always the chance that it will not—it may defeat your purpose. Unless it have its origin in a circumstance related to your theme and the occasion you will be wise to forego the temptation, if indeed you ever have it, to tell a funny story. Most of such "stories" have their origin in the sense of the ridiculous, they appeal to a faculty far removed from those commonly associated with the ends of serious public address. To tell stories and attempt at the same time to make a speech, is to try to play two rôles at the one time.

By Way of a Word Picture.—In his speech before the Knights of Columbus, in New York, on February 22, 1918, Dr. John G. Coyle brought together audience, subject and occasion by recalling a picture vivid in the memory of his hearers.

On this anniversary of the birth of George Washington, well termed "the Father of Our Country," your Council meets under inspiring circumstances. This day we have seen the ten thousand drafted men from Camp Upton parading in this city. The snow was falling as they marched. It clung to their shoulders. It made soft white flecks upon their hair. It filtered down their rifle barrels. They marched with erect heads. They were bronzed, vigorous, confident, virile. They swung down the avenue with precision and power.

And as we looked at them on this Birthday of Washington we saw in them the army of democracy. They were our brothers, our sons, our relatives; husbands and sweethearts of American women; members of American households. But a few months ago they were clerks, artisans, workers, producers, part of the great American people engaged in the

pursuits of peace. They were called into service, not by the mandate of any military despot, not by the coercion of soldiery already in arms. They were summoned because their own elected representatives, men chosen directly by the people, had decreed that the fight for the liberty of the world and the safety of democracy should be made by the army of democracy, the able-bodied citizenry of the United States, called forth in the name of all the people to defend the liberties of all the people.

The events in which you have a part will provide you with many examples of problems in communication with audiences. There will be admirable solutions, indifferent and negligible ones, and examples of what you will wish to avoid. You will have the advantage of knowing the conditions and circumstances of each speech and in your attempt to discover just what the ideas of the speakers were—Lincoln's method, you remember—you will learn more of the art of transmitting thought to others than any book alone can teach. The devices used by speakers for purposes of introduction will be easy to analyze and failures will supply you with instruction as well as neatly turned and successful openings.

Economy of the Immediate Moment.—Do not forget that the skilful speaker is ever ready to discard what he has made ready, in the face of elements that appear in the situation after he has arrived on the platform, or even, as it often seems wise, after he has been introduced. It may be that the events of the hour have already focused the attention of the audience and aroused their interest to such a pitch that to interpose a series of preliminary remarks would be a useless, perhaps an unpardonable digression. For he seeks to convey his message, to present his case, to stir his hearers. If the device which he has ingeniously contrived appears unnecessary, he cheerfully foregoes it. He is grateful for the turn of events that has relieved him of one step in the task.

The bond established, the way of communication opened, whether by your own efforts or by the chance of circumstance, you look ahead to the way of your purpose. You do not wish to

keep the "open" minds waiting. So you present the thoughts that make up the substance of your speech, either in the order and arrangement determined in advance, or in a modification of that order directed by what you have learned of your audience in the minutes that you have passed in their company.

The Speech Proper.—The substance of your speech can always be tersely represented in a single sentence. This theme sentence, which may or may not be incorporated in the actual speech, is your guidepost, your trail mark. To support it you have to present to the audience before you the material you have prepared. You will follow the general principle of expression: first, "significant statement"; then "justification." To accomplish your purpose you will break up your treatment into the divisions appropriate to the several elements involved in the proposition or theme, and present each in turn with its appropriate substance. This is just what you do in conversation, in writing a business letter, in supporting or opposing a measure that comes up for discussion in your club.

But when you do this in a public address you must take care to provide for elements not present on these other occasions. In conversation the unsatisfied listener can, by objection and question, determine to his satisfaction just what you mean. In the case of a letter, written for a single reader who very likely is known to the writer, there is opportunity for rereading and for further correspondence. In the club meeting there is the freedom of the floor that enables others to question the speaker and enables the speaker to supplement his exposition. In a public address what you present must be made effective completely and immediately. At such a time you will find particularly beneficial the advice given in Chapters XV-XVII to seek control of the forms and devices employed by the best writers and speakers, in presenting ideas with a minimum of expenditure and a maximum of result.

Whatever the nature of the address you have to deliver, your

aim is to present thought. To do it effectively, you have to speak with clearness, with force and with dignity.

Clearness.—Once you have reached the minds of your hearers you want to maintain easy contact to the very end of your speaking. To do this you have to make your utterances so clear that it will require no special effort on the part of the audience to comprehend what you say; so clear that no one of normal mentality in the audience can possibly misunderstand. The individual part or element of thought must be clear; the whole message must be clear. The key or theme sentence that you have in your mind, should remain explicitly or implicitly in the minds of your hearers, as the result of your speaking. To accomplish this, the thoughts that you have pondered to make valid, the reasonings you have tested for soundness and the facts you have carefully authenticated, must be presented in order. You will want to have effective order in the whole and in each part of your address.

Order in the Whole.—As you have made ready in careful fashion, the plan or pattern of your speech will be visible to your mind's eye at a glance. It will not be too complicated a plan. It will be so familiar that if you change or redispense parts of it at the moment of utterance, consciously or subconsciously under the stimulus of the presence of the audience, the whole will not suffer and your purpose will be served. Your speech will have that "progression" or "movement" so necessary to good public speaking. To secure this dynamic clearness has been the chief burden of your meditations on the subject matter of the speech. It is the important element in the committee report, the opinion on a motion, to mention only two of the types of informal address with which you are already familiar. Your labor of organization has probably left you in little doubt as to the order you ought to follow.

This brief of Governor Smith's address at Philadelphia, already cited, on bonding the State for adequate hospitalization, will show the main features and plan of a great speech.

It would be difficult for conditions in Pennsylvania to be worse than in my own State of New York. Public indignation arises only against wasted dollar, not against public dollar properly expended.

The hospitals in New York were inadequate and antiquated. (*concrete instances*)

False notions of economy, fostered by political aspects of two year term, gave us attempts at relief by annual appropriation.

The system of annual appropriation failed miserably and ridiculously (*concrete instances—prisons, and other public institutions*) in the State of New York. Is it not generally a failure?

It is not good business. Annual appropriation wastes money. Under present conditions it cannot accomplish its purpose. Bond issue is good business.

Aside from money, aside from politics, the State (*the people*) has a duty—to care for the weak, the sick, the afflicted.

This address was about 6,500 words in length.

At the Buffalo Exposition, on September 5, 1902, President McKinley delivered a compact little speech of about 800 words. We print here the introduction in full, the significant statements of the body of the address, and the conclusion in full.

The introduction was :

Expositions are the timekeepers of progress. They record the world's advancement. They stimulate the energy, enterprise, and intellect of the people, and quicken human genius. They go into the home. They broaden and brighten the daily life of the people. They open mighty storehouses of information to the student. Every exposition, great or small, has helped to some onward step.

The ideas of the body of the speech are shown by the following extracts :

Comparison of the ideas is always educational, and as such, instructs the brain and hand of man. . . .

. . . Modern inventions have brought into close relation widely separated peoples and made them better acquainted. . . . The same important news is read, though in different languages, the same day in all Christendom. . . .

The period of exclusiveness is past. The expansion of trade and commerce is the pressing problem. . . .

We must build the Isthmian Canal. . . . In the furtherance of these

objects of national interest and concern you are performing an important part. The good work will go on. It cannot be stopped. These buildings will disappear; this creation of art and beauty and industry will perish from sight, but their influence will remain to "make it live beyond its too short living, with praises and thanksgiving." Who can tell the new thoughts that have been awakened, the ambitions fired, and the high achievements that will be wrought through this Exposition?

The conclusion was as follows:

Gentlemen, let us ever remember that our interest is in concord, not conflict; and that our real eminence rests in the victories of peace, not those of war. We hope that all who are represented here may be moved to higher and nobler efforts for their own and the world's good, and that out of this city may come not only greater commerce and trade for us all, but, more essential than these, relations of mutual respect, confidence, and friendship, which will deepen and endure. Our earnest prayer is that God will graciously vouchsafe prosperity, happiness, and peace to all our neighbors, and like blessings to all the peoples and powers of earth.

Force.—You need to present impressively the facts you consider important for the audience before you. Your problem lies in finding the forms that will adapt your thoughts to the minds of those hearers. The more active your own mind has been, the more accurately will it calculate the ways of other minds with this thought. You will see in a hundred odd circumstances, little clues that you will learn to trust. You cannot begin in the middle, taking for granted the ability of the audience to reach your side and catch your stride in a single heroic leap. You must find out if possible just where those other minds are apt to be, and lead the procession from that point. Or you must take a trail that leads past many joining points.

The meditation and reflection to which you resort in getting ready to speak is its own reward in another way. It serves to fill the mind with thoughts, ideas, considerations, implications, imaginings, which, over and above the body of fact and judgment comprising the substance of the speech, enable you to give force to your expression. It supplies you with the vivid illustration, the practical example, the parallel, the analogy.

Much of the success of Napoleon lay in his ability to command the affection of his army. His addresses to his troops are filled with appeals to their pride, patriotism, and loyalty, in language most concrete and dynamic. The following passage is from a speech that preceded the spectacular Italian campaign of 1797, which made Napoleon's strategy dreaded by his enemies and practically gave him control of the situation in France.

Soldiers, you have in a fortnight gained six victories; taken twenty-one stands of colors; seventy-one pieces of cannon; several strong places; conquered the richest part of Piedmont; you have made fifteen thousand prisoners, and killed or wounded more than ten thousand men. You have hitherto fought only for sterile rocks, rendered illustrious by your courage, but useless to the country; you have equalled by your services the victorious army of Holland and the Rhine. Deprived of everything, you have supplied everything. You have won battles without cannon; made forced marches without shoes; watched without brandy, and often without bread. The republican phalanxes, the soldiers of liberty, were alone capable of suffering what you have suffered.

Thanks be to you, soldiers. The grateful country will in part, be indebted to you for her prosperity; and if, when victorious at Toulon, you predicted the immortal campaign of 1794, your present victories will be the presage of more brilliant victories. Men, who smiled at your misery, and rejoiced in thought at the idea of the triumphs of your enemies, are confounded and appalled. But it must not, soldiers, be concealed from you, that you have done nothing, since something remains yet to be done. Neither Turin nor Milan is in your power. The ashes of the conquerors of the Tarquins are still disgraced by the ashes of Sasseville. At the commencement of the campaign you were destitute of everything; now you are amply provided; the magazines taken from your enemies are numerous; the artillery for the field and for besieging is arrived.

Soldiers, the country has a right to expect great things from you; justify her expectations. The greatest obstacles are undoubtedly overcome; but you have still battles to fight, cities to take, rivers to pass. Is there one among you whose courage is diminished? Is there one who would prefer returning to the summits of the Alps and the Apennines? No: all burn with the desire of extending the glory of the French; to humble the proud kings who dare to meditate putting us again in chains; to dictate a peace that shall be glorious, and that shall indemnify the country for the immense sacrifices which she made. All

of you burn with a desire to say on your return to your home, I belonged to the victorious army of Italy.

The Objective Faculty.—Moreover your efforts will have a cumulative effect. The more you exercise your mind in calculating the probable reactions of others the more adept you will become in that task. Memory assembles fragments. Imagination seizes upon that fragment which will gain a certain response from other minds. It is by means of these responses that you gain an active hearing for your thought. A seasoned speaker exhibits this faculty in every speech he makes.

Even when you stand in the relation of authority invited to advise, you will be more effective if you present, not the conclusions which you have reached, and your way of reaching them, but rather, objectively, the facts and circumstances of the case or problem, so that each member of the audience may himself draw the conclusions whether you state them for him later on or not.

Dynamic Presentation—Not Analytical.—In addressing a Conference on Education held at Bucknell University, in November, 1926, Will Grant Chambers, Dean of the School of Education of Pennsylvania State College, treated the subject of college residence requirements. He sketched the history of the traditional requirements. He did not declare that certain phases of the adherence to these traditions were unfair and then give his reasons. He put his case this way:

. . . Is it not possible that an insistence on the traditional residence requirements in such cases (adults), in order to maintain a cherished ancient standard, may so retard the professions served by these ambitious adult students as to produce more serious social consequences than the violation of an academic tradition could possibly produce?

The demands for college courses and college degrees by adults who cannot or will not meet the traditional residence and other subsidiary campus requirements has gradually wrested a few reluctant concessions from all but the most conservative eastern institutions. First came the summer session. For a long time after it crept in to the charmed

circle it was held at arm's length, its courses had to be especially marked and if its credits were recognized for a degree at all they had to be discounted. If Professor Jones gave English 99, in Room 22 L. A. during the fall semester, October to January inclusive, it was wholly respectable and carried full credits to a degree. But if Professor Jones gave English 99, in Room 22 L. A., using the same textbook, during July and August of the Summer Session—even though the students were older, more studious, more eager to learn, and earned higher grades, the value of the course was questionable, and its credits subject to discount. And even when the credits earned in Summer Session are now accepted at par, some colleges still refuse to permit the time spent in summer residence to apply on the minimum residence requirements for a degree. Why? Noah had no summer school on the ark!

Then came university extension with its extra-mural courses which had the presumption to ask for college credit. Generations of "day students" reluctantly admitted, seemed to have demonstrated that collegians might migrate daily between home and college without having all the knowledge gained at the college evaporate in transit. But who could be certain that if the professor migrated instead of the class, his vast store of facts and generalizations might not be lost or stolen? Jones teaching English 99, using Smith's textbook, in a dingy attic room in Adam and Eve Hall on the campus is safe and sane. But Jones, teaching English 99, from Smith's book, in a modern classroom of the new million dollar high school in a distant city is "something else again!" Furthermore, how can students who earn their college credits in extension courses ever learn the college yells or the college songs? . . .

Seriously, fellow teachers, can we not discard the folly of comparing the best campus work with the worst extension work? Doubtless there is poor teaching off the campus as well as good, but it can't be worse than some that is perpetrated daily on the campus, for there couldn't be any worse! It is well known that only the ablest teachers are permitted to undertake extension teaching, whether in extra-mural courses or correspondence classes, for the mature students will not stand for a poor teacher.

Order in Each Part.—But the bold lines of your speech, the three or four main points, cannot have their due proportion in the minds of your hearers unless each one is itself perfectly clear. There must be order in the material presented in support of a point, in explanation of a fact. Just what that order should

be, common sense, the purpose of speaking, the interests involved for the audience, your own ingenuity and tact will determine. There is no general rule. As in a report to a superior, it may be wise to set forth the facts first, and then to draw the conclusion. Or you may gain your effect by stating your conclusion or judgment first, and then explaining how you came to reach it. In either case, you seek a certain result in the minds of your hearers. The form is always subordinate to the idea. It is the idea that you want to fix in the minds of others. Hence the order will be determined by the associations and extensions which your pondering of the material and contemplation of the occasion has led you to expect from the particular audience concerned.

In his speech to the people of Pennsylvania about state provision for hospitals, Governor Smith did not say that it was absurd to appropriate small amounts each year for a cause that demanded a large outlay as the only proper solution of a public duty. He gave a series of concrete instances :

. . . Well if that is the case as to the hospitals for the care of the insane, what about all the rest of the State work; what about the reformatory, what about the prison; what about public work generally? Why it was all the same way. . . . Before we had bonds, here is the way we got a prison over in New York. We started it in 1916 with \$200,000. Up to and including 1923 we put a million, nine hundred and ninety-nine thousand dollars into it, and in 1924 they suddenly woke up to discover we had a model institution at Sing Sing, and the only thing missing was a place for the prisoners to sleep. Almost like building an automobile and neglecting the trifling little performance of putting the motor in it. There must be a reason for that. We have the chapel, we have the death house. We have the wall around it, we have the power-houses; we have everything but the places for the prisoners. Why? They cost \$3,500,000 and they run headlong into the economy program of every two years.

We started a teachers' college in Albany and we have had the foundation built for five years and every year we appropriated for new lumber to cover the foundation. . . .

At Raybrook in the Adirondack Mountains, we have a hospital for the treatment of incipient cases of tuberculosis, and under the regula-

tions of the Health Department people in only the primary stages of that disease can be admitted—and we have a waiting list. Well, it has been noted by the Health Authorities of the State that by the time people on the waiting list are reached, the disease has made such inroads on them that it is impossible for the State to do anything for them. . . .

In 1911 we started to build a new prison in Wingdale, Dutchess County. In 1923 we had two buildings built. I went there personally with the Superintendent of Public Works, the State Engineer, and the head of the hospital commission and we salvaged the two buildings, with a perfectly good power-house on the site and a sewage disposal plant; and we turned them into what is now known as Harlem Valley State Hospital. Why if you were allowed only our annual appropriations, you might have one or two of the walls of the third building by 1928 or 1929. (*Laughter*)

A funny thing about our Capitol in Albany—during the debate last winter one of my opponents said, “Look at the Capitol. Why the Capitol was built on the ‘pay-as-you-go plan’.” And I took him up right away. I said, “Sure it was, sure it was. Let us take a look at the Capitol.” (*Laughter*) Here is the history of the Capitol; the corner-stone was laid in 1869, and the contractor’s face removed from it in 1898; and it cost \$30,000,000. Architects and builders and men in position to know say that had the money been available for one contractor immediately, it could have been built for \$12,000,000.

Now, “Pay-as-you-go” sounds good. I will admit that for the debating class, or for the purpose of a closing of a school argument any young man or young woman who wants to make a good speech on economy could not have a better subject to talk about than “Pay-as-you-go.” (*Laughter*) It is all right. The unfortunate part, however, is that in government it does not work out, because the answer is that we do not pay and therefore we do not go.

You will note that even in this last paragraph which is by way of a summary of this portion of the address, the speaker did not risk the force of the point by the use of abstract forms. He did not say that it was theoretically wise to “pay-as-you-go” but practically wasteful. What he had “demonstrated” by concrete instances could result in but one conclusion in the minds of his hearers. That conclusion he “echoed” in a homely and pithy form: “We do not pay and therefore we do not go.”

Conclusion.—You will find it wise to prepare in advance a suitable and effective conclusion. You do not wish to violate the oft quoted fundamental principles of public speaking as set down by Josh Billings, or one of his fellow philosophers:

“Hev something to say.

Say it.

Set.”

Since your whole concern in speaking to an audience is to effect a purpose, to contribute to their thoughts, to stir their minds, or to move their wills to action, it would be folly not to consider beforehand just how you are to break off the line of communication you have established. When you have presented your thoughts you want to stop. Sir Austin Chamberlain attributes to Lord Palmerston this piece of advice to a beginner in the House: “You need not bother about the beginning of your speech, because that will arise naturally out of the debate. Nor will the body of the speech give you much trouble, for that will be concerned with the subject under discussion, and unless you were fully conversant with the matter you would not speak; but you must know your peroration or you will never be able to sit down.”

If you have not many times, as a member of an audience, made mental note of three or four or five excellent stopping places, utterly neglected by speaker or preacher, you have been singularly fortunate. When you are yourself on the platform you will do well to heed the advice of the old parliamentarian just quoted. You do not want to flounder on after the substance you have prepared has been uttered. You sought a way into the minds of your hearers—your withdrawal also should be ready. Your preparation can hardly fail to have supplied you with several thoughts acceptable as concluding elements. Choose that which best suits your main purpose. Think it out into words. Let your ear test it as well as your mind. You want to leave a final and lasting impression. Chance may favor you, the glow of the moment may furnish you with a happy inspiration, but again it

may not; you must be ready with whatever seems best—a terse summary, a personal appeal, an appeal to the future, a restatement of your proposition, a striking statement, an example, a question. It is your parachute. In justice to the audience if not for other reasons, you will not fly without it.

The most widely used form of conclusion is the personal appeal. By careful statement, direct or indirect, the speaker urges or suggests thought or action. The variations of this type of ending are so many that we can point out here only a few. Your own recollections will supply you with many others.

A Famous Conclusion.—Every American is familiar with the “Appeal to Arms” uttered by Patrick Henry, on March 23, 1775, in the old church at Richmond to the Virginia Convention of Delegates. This speech has suffered somewhat in its popularity from its choice by small boys at the height of their declamatory powers, yet because of the events and circumstances of its delivery, the speaker and his deeds, and the quality of the speech itself, it is deserving of fresh perusal. Here is the conclusion:

... The war is inevitable—and let it come! I repeat, sir, let it come!

It is in vain, sir, to extenuate the matter. Gentlemen may cry “Peace, peace”—but there is no peace. The war is actually begun! The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! Our brethren are already in the field! Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!

As Roosevelt Did It.—The conclusion of “The Strenuous Life” by Theodore Roosevelt at the Hamilton Club in Chicago, April 10, 1899, is just a summary of his views—his ideal as set forth in many of his addresses—in terms of action and the future.

I preach to you, then, my countrymen, that our country calls not for the life of ease, but for the life of strenuous endeavor. The twentieth century looms before us big with the fate of many nations. If we stand idly by, if we seek merely swollen, slothful ease, and ignoble peace, if we shrink from the hard contests where men must win at hazard of their lives and at the risk of all they hold dear, then the bolder and the stronger peoples will pass us by and win for themselves the domination of the world. Let us therefore boldly face the life of strife, resolute to do our duty well and manfully; resolute to uphold righteousness by deed and by word; resolute to be both honest and brave to serve high ideals, yet to use practical methods. Above all let us shrink from no strife, moral or physical within or without the nation, provided we are certain that the strife is justified; for it is only through strife, through hard and dangerous endeavor, that we shall ultimately win the goal of true national greatness.

Asquith's Call to Arms in 1914.—On the evening of September 5, 1914, Herbert Asquith, later Lord Oxford, at that time the British Prime Minister, addressed a public meeting in the Guildhall in London. His speech, known as the "Call to Arms" was received with acclamation by all of the people throughout the whole of the British Empire, to whom of course it was really addressed. This is the appeal with which the speaker closed:

I have little more to say. Of the actual progress of the war, I will not say anything except that in my judgment in whatever direction we look, there is abundant ground for pride and for confidence! I say nothing more because I think we should all bear in mind that we are at present watching the fluctuations of fortune only in the early stages of what is going to be a protracted struggle. We must learn to take long views, and to cultivate, above all, other faculties—those of patience, endurance and steadfastness. Meanwhile, let us go, each of us, to his or her appropriate place in the great common task. Never had a people more or richer sources of encouragement and inspiration. Let us realize, first of all, that we are fighting as a united empire, in a cause worthy of the highest traditions of our race. Let us keep in mind the patient and indomitable seamen, who never relax for a moment, night or day, their stern vigil of the lonely sea. Let us keep in mind our gallant troops, who to-day, after a fortnight's continuous fighting under conditions which would try the metal of the best army that ever took the field maintain not only an undefeated, but an unbroken front.

(Cheers) Finally, let us recall the memories of the great men and the great deeds of the past, commemorated, some of them, in the monuments which we see around us on these walls not forgetting the dying message of the younger Pitt, his last public utterance, made at the table of one of your predecessors, my Lord Mayor, in this very hall: "England has saved herself by her exertions, and will, as I trust, save Europe by her example." The England of those days gave a noble answer to his appeal, and did not sheath the sword until, after twenty years of fighting, the freedom of Europe was secured. Let us go and do likewise.

Treasure Shared.—The conclusion may be a beautiful thought, which at the end of his discourse the speaker shares with his audience. This was the conclusion of the address which Stanley Baldwin, present Prime Minister of Great Britain, delivered as president of the Classical Association at the Middle Temple Hall in London in January, 1927.

Have we not the eternal youth of the world in "*Dulce direntem ad gratus puellae risus ab angulo*"? A score of words, and we see our own childhood, our children's and every generation from the beginning to the end of time. What memories such lines call up! They knock at the heart like the drumtaps of the Fifth Symphony. I have little more to add. If I have convinced you of my sincerity as a member of the association, I am happy. I may repeat to you, what I have said to my friends, that when my work in politics is completed, I shall take down all my old companions from my shelves and work once more with dictionary and grammar. I have always kept the embers aglow that they may easily be blown into flame to warm my senile bones.

I remember many years ago standing on the terrace of a beautiful villa near Florence. It was a September evening, and the valley below was transfigured in the long horizontal rays of the declining sun. And then I heard a bell, such a bell as never was on land or sea, a bell whose every vibration found an echo in my innermost heart. I said to my hostess: "That is the most beautiful bell I have ever heard." "Yes," she replied, "it is an English bell." And so it was. For generations its sound had gone out over English fields giving the hours of work and prayer to English abbey, and then came the Reformation, and some wise Italian bought the bell whose work at home was done, and sent it to the valley of the Arno, where after four centuries it stirred

the heart of a wandering Englishman and made him sick for home. Thus the chance word of a Latin inscription, a line in the anthology, a phrase of Horace, or a "chorus ending of Euripides" plucks at the heart-strings and stirs a thousand memories, memories subconscious and ancestral.

CHAPTER XXV

FACING THE AUDIENCE

Conscious Control.—The preceding chapter discussed the substance of the speech. There is something also to be said with respect to its delivery. In the informal address to a small group of acquaintances the problems of presentation still concern mainly your power of self-control and self-development, learning the *strokes*. In the address to a general audience of strangers you may be presumed to know the strokes, and the problem becomes one of playing the game on a field of larger scale, a field which varies with every occasion. In conversation and informal club address the arts of delivery, in particular, are largely a matter of indirect control: of your being able to fit into the situation which you find and make the best of it. In the address to a general audience you need to keep conscious control. If the situation is not propitious you have the responsibility for altering it through conscious modification of your technique.

An old hand nearly always obtains a better total effect before the general audience than a beginner, even though what he says may be of itself less interesting and less valuable. Experience has taught him "inside ball." He is able to utilize devices for affecting the audience apart from the thoughts expressed. He is thus able to take advantage of favorable turns in the circumstances, and minimize the loss from unlucky incidents. If from the first, on occasions that demand general addresses, you can begin to acquire the point of view of the veteran, and to watch the points which he has learned to watch, your own apprenticeship in the major league will be sooner completed.

An Eye for the Place.—The veteran has learned to take note of the hall or auditorium—its size, shape, and layout—and of

the size, distribution, and character of the audience. As soon as you reach the place where you are to speak, you will do well to examine its physical features, not merely size and shape in general, but the height of the room, the location of doors and balconies, whether there are pillars, seats under a balcony, seats far at the side. Note where the platform is placed, its height; whether there is a good background for the speaker, or whether there are bright lights directly behind him or in front of him. If you are speaking out of doors, as may be the case, note the wind and the position of the sun.

A Thought for the People.—Similarly, you will consider the size of the audience and where they are seated; their character as regards appearance and evident social status, perhaps nationality; whether men, women, or men and women together; young or mature; whether apparently acquainted with one another or a collection of strangers. During the remarks of the chairman or of other speakers note how attentive the audience is, whether they appear distracted with the entrance of late comers, with the opening and shutting of doors, and other noises. Note whether the doors are kept closed during a speech.

In a strange room there is always the question at the outset of making yourself heard. In the regular meeting place of your association, that problem does not exist. With some large and important meetings today, mechanical amplifiers have eliminated it. But with most general gatherings it still remains. You want to have your voice carry to every person in the audience without any suggestion either of strain or of noisiness. If you have been giving some attention to your voice in club addresses and in conversation, and if you remember to apply the right method of placing the tone, you will have no difficulty in making yourself heard in even a large place, or out of doors. You need to take special thought of the matter, though, in the opening sentence.

Your Voice.—Watch the chairman and the other speakers. Listen to their voices. How do they seem to carry? Before you

begin, note whether or not the audience is quiet. Here again, consider the people at the back of the hall as well as those in front. Give them all time to be seated and to settle themselves. When you begin to talk, address the people in the back row. Watch them. Do they seem to hear readily? If there is a gallery give special attention to the people sitting beneath it; that is usually a hard place in which to hear. A question or a remark that will tend to bring an answer, or a smile of response, will help to indicate whether your voice is carrying.

As for carrying power, sharpness of enunciation, range, pitch, and other points of the mechanics of speech, apply the principles you follow in speaking to your own association; only the dimensions are magnified as the general audience requires. Because the room is larger, the audience more numerous, you will probably have to use a more intense tone and slower utterance.

You can readily learn to intensify your tones just enough for the size of the place if you make it a practice to note the effect of the first few sentences. Those opening sentences should be spoken very distinctly. Most of the members of a general audience are strangers to the speaker. They may have to get used to his voice before they can hear him readily, as one has to get used to the voice of a stranger in telephone conversation.

Molding the Tones.—Do not hurry. Do not telescope your words but let each one float out by itself. If you are speaking in a room that is very large, or out of doors, speak still more slowly and in fuller and more sustained tones.

A year or so ago, at a luncheon of the Merchants Association of New York, in the big room of the Hotel Astor, one of the speakers was a gentleman who had done much talking before committees and little groups, but not before large audiences. He was slight in figure with a flute-like little voice. He made no effort to make his tones louder or slower than in ordinary conversation, just talked along as if to a little group. The quiet, high-pitched little tones trickled through the big room with perfect

distinctness, but the total effect was inadequate. As a speaker he was out of the scheme. Everyone heard what he said but it seemed insignificant in that setting. If he had spoken more slowly, in sustained tones, the effect would have been entirely satisfactory. The talk needs to have body and fullness in proportion to the size of the room and number of people in the audience.

Shouting a Great Mistake.—But do not yell, even to the big audience. To shout is not only to offend the ears of the attentive but to make it easy for the inattentive to occupy themselves with other pursuits. There is a simple little device of the trained teacher which all speakers of skill have acquired—the art of drawing the audience to the speaker by lowering the voice and speaking in a confidential manner, rather than expending energy in “chasing” the audience.

The range of melody and inflection in an address to a large general audience is, of course, wider than in ordinary conversation, or before smaller groups, to correspond with the larger scale of dimensions throughout. Always, however, avoid a pitch that is high and shrill. Never begin your speech on a high pitch.

“Placing” the Tones.—In a public address you need particularly the support of a right method of sounding or placing the tones, as explained in Chapter XXXIV. Some practice beforehand in sounding the sort of tones you need in a large place will be helpful. Occasions for practice at speaking in a large place are, of course, not numerous with most people. Few of us can get into a large theatre or auditorium to rehearse a speech even if we could take the time, and besides the acoustics of a large empty hall are very different from those of a hall that is filled with people. There are two effective devices, however, for practicing the tones suitable for speaking in a big place. One is that of talking over a long distance telephone. If you will watch yourself in handling a long distance conversation you will note features of your utterance, especially your manner of

forming the sustained, even tones, that may be utilized when you have to make a speech to a large audience. The other device for practice, which for most persons is less expensive, is that of talking out of doors. Take a walk in the country with a friend. Station him some distance away, say 100 feet, and proceed to make him a little speech, or perhaps hold a conversation with him. From the effort to make the tone carry in the open air, you will develop the same technique of control of the speech muscles that is needed in addressing a large audience. Incidentally, in the last chapter of Thomas Hardy's novel, "The Woodlanders," there is an amusing transcript of outdoor conversation between two men about half a mile apart, which offers good material for practice in the art of placing the tone.

Dry Throat? Don't Water It.—You may find it difficult at first to get your voice out at all. The excitement, which is perfectly natural, may give you a dry throat. Some speakers have a glass of water at hand and take a sip when the mouth feels dry, but this is of little real help and to develop the habit of relying on the water is unfortunate. The best way is to work right into the speech. In the phrase of a veteran Indiana political speaker, "Just talk right to the folks in the back rows. Pretty soon the saliva will begin to flow and then you'll be all right."

When you rise to speak the audience may or may not have settled down to listen. You can wait for them or you can begin to speak slowly and in a well modulated tone of voice, repeating, when you have gained full attention, what you said in the first sentence or two. In neither case should you display any impatience with the situation. Sometimes a single clear-cut sentence, rather loud, followed by a pause, will catch attention. Sometimes it is better to begin by quietly and confidentially addressing the front row; the others will come to order and listen.

Getting Started.—With a big audience of miscellaneous character it is wise not to begin your main talk at once; instead, start

them on a siding as noted in the preceding chapter. First make one short direct remark—it hardly matters what the remark is—and wait for a response. Some of them will listen. Then another short remark and a pause. More will begin to listen. Then another, and perhaps another. After several pulls the heavy train will connect up and start; the crowd of individual listeners will come to a common focus of attention, grow quiet, and submit to the speaker's impulse. If you begin with your main speech before you have general attention you may never pick up the majority of the audience. When once you get them listening as a body you can usually carry along a large crowd with slight effort.

Sometimes a speaker can make use of a barrage of stories to catch the attention of the crowd and pull them together. This is a device perennially used by the street fakir, who has to attract the attention of people hurrying past. As pointed out already in this volume, this is not the best method. It wastes time, and it takes away, unquestionably, from the serious force of your speech. If you have stories that are really appropriate, utilize them, one at a time, later in your speech, to mark a transition or to let the audience rest.

Turning Chance or Mischance to Account.—There is sometimes the problem of response to an introduction—of utilizing a lucky aspect of the situation at the beginning, or of minimizing an unfortunate one. A distinguished expert on agriculture was to address a large audience chiefly of farmers in the great auditorium of a western state university. All knew him by reputation, though they had never seen him. The chairman of the occasion unfortunately, mistaking both the kind of man he was dealing with and the character of the audience, proceeded to “introduce” the speaker in a long and flowery eulogy. When this was concluded the distinguished expert, a grim little man with a keen face, ambled down to the edge of the platform and remarked, “Now I know how a flapjack feels when the syrup has been

poured over it." The farmer audience was his from that moment.

Booker Washington's Chicken-Stealing Story.—Before the City Club of Chicago, the great negro leader, Booker Washington, by his dexterous handling of an unfortunate situation at the outset of his speech, turned it into an advantage. He was in Chicago to begin a campaign for endowment for his school in Tuskegee. A few days before, another well-known negro speaker had been at the club and had delivered a striking and even beautiful address packed full of bitterness toward the white race. Apparently it was anything but a good time for Mr. Washington to solicit subscriptions.

The meeting room was jammed with people. The crowd caused some delay in coming to order and when the speaker rose, he commented on the fact.

"I am sorry," he said, "to be late. I always try to be on time but sometimes it is impossible. Three weeks ago I had an engagement with an old colored man up state in Alabama. He kept me waiting over an hour. When he finally arrived, I reproached him rather sharply.

"The old fellow said to me, 'Yo mustn't be ha'd on me. Ah've had trouble at home. Mah wife went out and lef' de chick'n coop do' open, and de chick'ns all got out and went home!'"

Then without a word of transition, he passed into a terse analysis of the business situation at Tuskegee, a straightforward, luminous, financial statement which any of those La Salle Street financial men would have been glad to duplicate.

With those few opening sentences of his chicken-stealing story, he had dissipated all thought of inferiority. A man who could tell such a story on his own people—exactly as a white man might tell a story about his own people, without a particle of fear of being misinterpreted—such a man you felt had nothing to apologize for. He was a man and an equal.

Cordial Contact Without Words.—Sometimes a speaker can set the key for his speech without saying a word. Theodore Roosevelt, during the period of his eclipse, had to address an audience that was exceedingly large but apparently not over-friendly. Well-meaning admirers had banked the stage with flower pieces which, besides being rather garish, made it difficult for some of the audience to see. Mr. Roosevelt came on the stage a few minutes before time to begin, sat down beside the chairman, glanced round at the audience, then at the company of distinguished citizens on the platform behind him, then at the flower pieces. Then without a word, he motioned to the chairman, jumped up, and he and the chairman proceeded with their own hands to hustle the biggest of the flower pieces off into the wings, leaving a broad clear space at the front of the platform. He came back from the wings with a cheerful grin, dusting off his frock coat with his hands, and the audience broke into enthusiastic applause. From that moment the weather signs for the speech were "set fair"!

When you face the audience in club or association meeting to present to other minds the thought that is in your own, your remarks should seem to flow with little apparent effort. The listeners draw them out. Before a large general audience, you have to drive out your thoughts with more force. Do not let yourself speak coldly or insignificantly. Talk dynamically, concentrating attention on the listeners, watching the faces before you. According as you see agreement, question, disapproval, direct your attention to the face which expresses that feeling and try to win support.

Martin W. Littleton, a speaker of distinction, in an article on after dinner speaking, which appeared in the *American Magazine* for October, 1923, counsels the closest attention to the audience in the course of speaking:

Note how silent the attentive audience is; . . . Observe every action; . . . observe irritation expressed on the features when sounds are made . . . learn to know the signs of agreement, written on the

features, . . . the expression or disagreement in the shake of the head . . . the attempt at times to repeat words and phrases evident in the repetition of words and phrases as indicated by the lips, . . . When you detect this sign of agreement . . . use it . . . don't say too much.

Response May Be Slow.—At times an audience responds slowly; it will tax your patience and your ingenuity to reach them. It will not do to lose the least part of your good nature or to show the smallest sign of irritation. The next sentence you utter may strike a response. In the article just mentioned, Mr. Littleton tells of a westerner, speaking at a dinner in an eastern metropolis, who could not seem to get attention. Finally he accentuated his western drawl and remarked drily, "From the tops of skyscrapers you see the West and thus you know there is something beyond your city," and the audience acknowledged the hit with a hearty laugh. From that point on he had their steady attention.

Handling Emergencies.—The course of a speech to a strange audience does not always run smooth. There may be untimely noises and interruptions. Your voice may be drowned by railway trains, street-cars, and automobiles; or someone may interject an unseemly question that throws your thought off the track.

A man who is in great demand today as a speaker tells of an experience of his own as a young professor in a country college. He was invited to deliver a high-school commencement address in a nearby town. It was a blistering June night. The room was crowded. The professor's address came at the end of the usual long miscellaneous program.

As he was pounding along, to an audience that was sleepy and cross, a jackass outside an open window raised his voice in a vigorous "Hee-Haw!"

The young professor, catching the titter that ran through the audience, remarked with a rueful grin: "Well, there seem to be two of us!"

The roar of laughter that followed woke everybody up and from then on the speech was a great success.

What Is Least Expected May Occur.—Even after you have finished, some accident may mar the effect of the structure you have so carefully built. Some years ago a laborer employed in unloading a freight steamer in Brooklyn, fell into the hold and was killed. It was not the fault either of the company owning the ship or of the company which had chartered it for that voyage and whose cargo was being unloaded. The man had fallen because he was reckless and had disobeyed instructions. But the widow brought suit for compensation against both companies. The lawyer for the shipowners had a case that was absolutely sound. His company had no concern with the venture of the ship in that place or at any time; they were merely the owners. He presented his case in a sound and convincing manner. As he brought his speech to a close the looks of the jury showed pretty clearly that he had won. But the laborer's widow and little children were in court, and just as the corporation lawyer took his seat, the baby cried—perhaps it was pinched—and the effect which the lawyer had built up with consummate care was smashed at once. These are accidents against which one cannot provide.

Fortunately the speeches which most of us have to make rarely involve situations of such seriousness. If you are ready, alert and in direct touch with the audience, you need be little troubled; if you use your wits you will find your way out of almost any situation.

Be "Easy."—If you should forget, just skip the point and go on. You may or may not recall later on the omitted portion. If you do recall it, put it in, just as you would do in conversation; if you do not recall it, never mind; something else just as good will probably occur to you. While as a rule you will not call attention to the fact that you have forgotten, it is sometimes a good plan to admit frankly that this or that point has slipped

from your mind. You would do it in conversation without hesitancy; before an audience it may be best to treat the matter in the same simple way. In short, take the situation easily. If you forget, go on with the next point you think of. If an interruption comes—noise, passing trains, questions—stop and wait for quiet; make some brief comment, perhaps, but do not let yourself be troubled. If you are self-possessed the audience will not be troubled.

Impromptu Additions.—You may be tempted to add to the thought you have prepared for the audience before you; if the addition is just a bit of information you had neglected, a fact or item of consideration that will help to gain your purpose, by all means present it. The actual presence of the audience—the heightened sense of communication, the tension of the mind induced by the situation—may well effect a mental activity above the normal. You would be unwise if you did not allow yourself to take advantage of this urge. What happens in games of strength and skill—in physical combat, that superaction of the human mind and body—seemingly without a fully conscious operation of the will, has its counterpart in affairs of the mind. In public address this super-sensitivity, or special awareness that gives us insight into what should be said at the moment, can be markedly developed. It will prove of special service.

Beware the Detour!—On the other hand you have to guard against a very human tendency to fill in with parenthetical observations and asides which are pertinent enough as a part of your own thought but which have no place in the real pattern of your speech. These are doubly dangerous because of the digressions to which they often lead.

In particular, beware of detouring just to gain applause or a laugh. It is an insidious temptation, when an audience responds to a keen remark or an amusing turn or phrase, or a good story, to try it again—it is so pleasant to feel an audience applaud or purr—but if you can resist this temptation and go “hot-footing”

along on your way, you will retain the respect of the audience and your hold upon them.

Mechanical Aids.—If you are giving a lecture that requires the use of slides, there are several precautions that you will wish to take, to insure smoothness in the management of mechanical matters that often spoil what would otherwise be a good address. If these cautions seem too obvious, your personal experience alike as speaker and as listener has been exceptionally fortunate.

It is well to try beforehand the lantern to be used for projection. If you have a reliable assistant, he may perhaps make the trial for you. A poor screen, imperfect electrical connections, a defective slide carrier, can all be remedied an hour or two before the appointed time. When audience and lecturer have to wait for feverishly executed repairs, something is lost to the occasion. If the illuminating element should be too hot, it might crack or dissolve your precious slides. You will want to take no chances.

You will have your slides in order, and will hit upon some inconspicuous means of indicating to the operator that you are ready for the next slide. A noisy signal making a military or gymnastic event of each change of slide, helps to spoil an address. Your arrangement or plan will keep you to your theme and your development of the subject, so that the slides will serve their proper function of incidental illustration to your thought. Clumsiness in this respect turns an illustrated lecture into a halting series of commentaries made by the speaker as he views each slide in turn. If you take the care that Poor Richard advises, you will know your material and your slides. You will be able to talk to your audience. From your position on the platform you ought to be able to glimpse the screen without seeming to neglect the audience. The same precautions are advisable in the case of a talk illustrated by motion pictures. Attention to them will help you to maintain the proper relationship between lecture and incidental illustrative material.

If you are to employ placards, diagrams, charts or other graphic aids, you will court failure if they are not large enough for the purpose. What you might use with complete success in committee chamber, or in a small hall, will not necessarily do for an auditorium. It is better to resort to words alone than to use charts that can be seen only by the first few rows of your audience. If your charts are very important, have them drawn to a scale that will suit your purpose, or have lantern slides made. Otherwise do not attempt to use them.

Printed Aids, Where Convenient.—If you have occasion to refer to books and other printed material on the subject of your lecture, you might prepare a brief bibliography which you can hand to the secretary of the organization before which you speak for the convenience of members who may wish to pursue the subject further. If there are government pamphlets available, it would be little of a tax on your time to have your secretary send for them, so that you can leave a set of them with the secretary of the organization you address. The members of an audience who not only gain knowledge from the speaker in the course of his lecture, but in addition receive from him the means of gaining further knowledge are doubly served.

An audience, gathered to hear an address on Adult Education by a distinguished scientific lecturer, found in their seats copies of a Science Service Bulletin, in which was printed what purported to be the address they had come to hear that evening. In the interval before the speaker took the platform a good many copies of the Bulletin were scanned with a very natural curiosity, and when he began to speak a good many of the audience hung upon his words, to see where the printed part came in!

They were rewarded by an admirable address, both instructive and entertaining, but nothing that was in the Bulletin met their ears.

When some 25 minutes had passed, the distinguished lecturer stopped and said: "Ladies and Gentlemen: The time allowed us

is up, and the broadcaster must now be turned off. But you will find the rest of my address on the Bulletin in your seats."

They had been stimulated to listen with special attention to the part of the address which the speaker had delivered, and had been prepared to read with equal attention the second part of the address, which time did not permit him to deliver entire.

Resting the Audience.—The inexperienced in addressing large audiences are disposed often to censure the old hand for the loose structure of his speeches, for his rambling. At times, no doubt, the criticism is justified. More often, however, the old hand has good reason for his looseness of structure; he has learned the importance of letting the audience rest. Dr. Conwell's famous lecture, "Acres of Diamonds," which was delivered probably to more people than any other American speech or lecture, consisted of about one-third explanation and argument and two-thirds examples and stories. Hardly any American has had more power over popular audiences than Wendell Phillips—the scion of Boston and Harvard antecedents—who "went radical" and became the leading anti-slavery agitator of the 1840's and '50's. His addresses also were shot through and through with stories—breathing places. It is an established maxim of one of the great preaching orders that no plea, no statement calling for close attention, should be more than 15 minutes long; it may be built out with preliminary and supplementary matter, but this, these preachers urge, should make no strain upon attention.

If you are able to stop the machinery, let the audience relax, and then pick them up again and go on, your listeners will feel, though probably no one puts the thought into words, that you are master of the situation, and that you are really talking to them.

To keep an audience listening, beware of soliloquy, and beware also of thought-patterns which are too closely connected. As explained in Chapter XXXII, a solid metal road is not so good for the listener's progress as a series of properly placed step-

ping stones. Difficulty in holding the attention of an audience is most apt to develop when the speaker tries to follow too closely his own prearranged pattern of thought.

Resting Yourself.—When you are fairly launched into your speech you may find thoughts and impulses coming so fast upon your mind that they run away with you. Beware of getting into a sustained loud tone. That suggests lack of discrimination among the ideas you present, and lack of control. Beware of too great eagerness and of too great fluency. You may utilize here the device mentioned in Chapter XVII of pausing now and then to take two or three deep breaths, drawing the air down deep into your lungs. That lets the audience rest and stretch. It will also serve, perhaps, better than any other device, to impress the point which you have just made. Moreover, it enables the speaker himself to rest.

The glass of water may sometimes be utilized effectively as a means of gaining time. A close associate of one of the ablest political speakers of today tells this story:

One night I was speaking on the same platform with him. He paused, after a vigorous passage and turned to pour himself a drink of water. I reached forward and poured it for him. As he took the glass he thanked me and then added in a low tone: "Let me pour it myself. It gives me time to think." After that I noticed what he did. He would pause, now and then, very deliberately pour a little water into the glass, and very deliberately lift it up and drink it. The pause gave him time to think and gave the audience a rest without breaking the audience's attention.

Aside from giving the speaker time to think, an occasional pause rests his voice, relieving the throat muscles and easing the tone. We need all of us to beware the tense, edgy tone which is almost certain to come with sustained, vehement argument or explanation. That sort of tone is a most dangerous factor in a speech. It irritates the listeners; some of them are made to feel that they are being driven; all of them are made nervous and jumpy, liable to nervous laughter. In a small Southern town the

regular pastor exchanged pulpits one Sunday with a minister from a distant town. The visiting preacher was highly emotional in manner; he worked himself up to tremendous climaxes, with every device of vocal and pantomimic display. The congregation, unaccustomed to such flights, were impressed but nervous. It chanced that the eight-year-old son of the regular pastor was sitting in the front row of the old-fashioned gallery at the side of the church. The youngster was tremendously impressed and his eyes were glued upon the eloquent preacher. The biggest climax of all arrived. The silence was like death, till the preacher, who had worked himself almost into a frenzy, drew a huge handkerchief from the depths of his coat tail pocket and mopped his brow. The artless and admiring youngster piped up from the gallery, "Makes ye sweat, don't it?" The congregation, devout though they were, went into a gale of laughter and the unlucky minister never regained control.

Pausing to Take Bearings.—An occasional pause enables you also to size up the situation—perhaps omit a part of what you had intended to say. He who makes one sentence do the work of two or more is a public benefactor. Remember, it is not always necessary to deliver all of the speech which you envisioned when you began to speak. You may be forced to detour, and to omit much that you thought essential, and yet by the way you present one portion, or even a single sentence, you may win your point. A lecturer from a northern university was addressing a girls' college in the South, talking by request of the local Woman's Club upon the rather difficult subject of the modern Irish drama. The audience consisted of about fifty members of the Woman's Club and three hundred young ladies from the college. Presently, as the speaker droned along, one little bobbed head after another dropped on the shoulder of the next girl until one-third of the audience were manifestly asleep. Apparently those girls knew little about the Irish drama and cared less. On a sudden impulse the lecturer stopped, walked to the edge of the

platform and with a direct "Young ladies!" began to talk to them about how much more fun it was to study plays and act them for themselves, rather than merely to watch other people in the movies, for instance. The accidental shot caught attention. It was Saturday night. The girls had been playing tennis and basket-ball all the morning and had all gone to the movies in the afternoon. One by one the heads came up. In three minutes they were all awake and listening, and when the speaker finished, he got a storm of applause rarely vouchsafed by that young sisterhood.

Henry Ward Beecher in his famous address at Liverpool in 1863, did not by any means succeed in covering fully the case he wished to present, but his two hours struggle with the hostile crowd convinced the audience, the newspapers, and the English people that he was a fighter and a good-natured one at that, and this won him a favorable hearing ever after.

Talking Over the Radio.—Recent years have seen the development of an entirely new type of public address, the radio talk. Many persons are giving radio talks today. A few do it very successfully, but most of them, unfortunately, do it poorly. The new method of presenting thought has a technique all its own, markedly different from the technique of face to face public speaking and from that of conversation as well.

The talk that goes over the radio may be either an ordinary speech to an audience, picked up by the microphone and broadcast, or it may be an address specially designed for radio transmission—as the President of the United States sits in his study and talks to the "mike" somewhat as he might talk over a telephone. With respect to the ordinary speech to an audience which is picked up and broadcast, it may be said that such speeches are not usually as satisfactory over the radio as the talk that is specially made for the "mike." For one thing, the speech to the face-to-face audience nearly always has to pass through a stage of sifting or "tuning"; skilled operators, listening in at the

station, have to modify the tones to render them more audible and distinct. As the speaker who is addressing a regular audience is very apt not to direct his talk always to the "mike," many of his words are caught indistinctly by the instrument and have to be amplified. On the other hand, if he speaks in loud, shouting tones all such tones have to be reduced, for shouting "blasts" the receiver, as in a telephone.

The speech specially designed for the radio offers other difficulties, which have to be allowed for, if the speaker is to succeed. First of all, a radio address is essentially different from all other public speaking in that the speaker cannot see or hear his audience, his target. He gets no response, no come-back to aid him in shaping his remarks. Thus the radio speech is entirely lacking in the element of continual adjustment to the audience which we have seen is the first essential of ordinary public speaking. Another point in which it differs from face to face public address is that there is no mass-psychology on the part of the audience. The listeners are not aware of each other, get no support or stimulus from each other. Each one is listening alone.

As the talk designed for the radio is delivered in quiet tones it is in certain respects like conversation. But obviously it is not conversation either, as there is no adjustment to a listener. It is merely addressed "to whom it may concern." On the other hand, of course, it cannot be soliloquy, just thinking aloud; it has to be presented in a form that is readily intelligible to listeners—*any* listeners.

"Spoken Writing."—Radio talk might be regarded as a sort of *spoken writing*. Its technique is really closer to that of simple writing than to that of speech. In this connection we may note that nearly all talks designed for the radio are fully written out in advance, and *read* to the instrument. Whenever possible they are rehearsed. Talking extempore over the radio is one of the most difficult feats that anyone could undertake. It takes an exceptional combination of cool head and vivid imagination, because you

have to think not only of what to say, in order to give the thought coherence, but also of the special technical points of phrasing and utterance noted below.

Whether we call the radio address *spoken writing* or call it a prepared conversational lecture, it is evident that there are difficulties in its proper delivery. As a conversational lecture running for several minutes without noticing the audience is unusual, extra effort has to be made for spontaneity and naturalness. This, say the radio experts, is to be attained solely through changes in the *tempo*—the use of pauses and of shifts to quicker or slower rate of speaking, and through changes of *pitch*, upward or downward. Both in pitch and in time, however, you have to keep to ordinary conversational limitations. If your pauses are too long, you lose the attention of the audience, because they cannot *see* you while pausing. And the pitch changes have to be kept moderate to correspond with the ordinary conversation characteristics of the talk otherwise.

Further, the radio listener is far more critical as to little points of form than the individuals in face to face audience or in conversation. He cannot see the speaker, to be influenced, perhaps disarmed by the speaker's appearance and manner. The radio listener notices closely peculiarities of utterance. A mistake in pronunciation will bring two hundred letters to the station next day, whereas in face to face talk it may entirely escape notice if other features of the talk are good.

The Technique of Radio Talking.—Here are some specific points of technique, as to phrasing and delivery, which experts in radio talking find it important to allow for:

First, careful *grouping* of words. In radio talk a fact which is clearly evident is that it is not individual words that count, but phrases and patterns of words.¹ Words are picked up by the listener only as parts of phrases and clauses.

Second, distinct enunciation. The words must be spoken

¹ See Chapter XXXI in this connection.

"trippingly on the tongue," as Hamlet advises the Players. You cannot use loud tones because of the danger of "blasting." You need to pay special attention to certain sounds that are poor for radio transmission, as over the telephone, and others which we often fail to utter carefully. The sound of *s*, in particular, is very apt not to be uttered distinctly.

Third, use of inflections. In ordinary talk inflections are important, but in radio talk they are all-important, and have to be studied out carefully beforehand. The rising inflection is far more effective than the falling inflection, because it suggests "I'm going on."

Fourth, the use of what one expert has called *ear-gestures*, devices to direct the listener's attention to what is coming. For example, before a change of some sort, it is wise to tell the listeners that you are going to change. Or you may repeat a word or phrase, or ask a question that suggests a possible change. Or some exclamation such as "Now, now," may help. Or, you may clear your throat. The "Ahem" of the old-time anecdote artist or barn-storming actor has been revived for the radio talker. Softer effects, asides, may be obtained by turning away from the "mike," or putting your hand in front of the mouth.

The development of this new art is just beginning. Its possibilities are very great. In attempting it, however, the speaker needs to remember every minute to make allowance, both in phrasing and in delivery, for the fact that the listener must get everything through his ears, and that each listener is alone as he listens.²

In All Speaking Keep a Sharp Look-out.—The First Commandment of the radio speaker—"Keep a sharp look-out!"—should be followed equally when addressing the face-to-face audience. Never let yourself become so absorbed in your case that you are oblivious to "weather" signs. The result is not likely to be happy, even if no casualty occurs; there is too much of a drop

² "Purposive Speaking," by Professor West of the University of Wisconsin, gives some useful suggestions for radio talking.

when you close. The listeners come out of the trance, later, a little ashamed of their emotional spree and a little vexed with you for bringing it on them. They may think you "a wonderful speaker," but they are more than likely to forget the message which you desired them to accept.

Like a good organist, play the audience out. Modulate; work down from your high climax, with milder matter for the closing sentences. With a small group it may be an effective clincher to stop with a jerk, but with a large audience that is most unwise. You do not want a long "coda," but neither do you want to produce an abrupt shock by suddenly finishing your speech.

Auto-Intoxication—Speakers Are Susceptible.—The greatest danger for the speaker is that of becoming the victim of his own excitement. It was this that Disraeli, the realist, had in mind when he characterized Gladstone, the man of powerful feeling, as "intoxicated with the exuberance of his own verbosity." This was what was meant by Lord Melbourne, the man of the world, when he said of the young Macaulay, "I wish I could be as certain of anything as Macaulay is of everything." The classic example of the speaker's auto-intoxication, of the speaker caught in the rut of his habitual mood, is that of Chaucer's Pardoner in the "Canterbury Tales." As the pilgrims are riding along, the Pardoner's tongue, loosened by the fourteenth century equivalent of the pocket flask, moves him to "tell on himself" to his traveling companions. He dilates upon his own cleverness and knavery and the cold-blooded skill with which his sermons are run off, until in a bravado of shameless confession he offers to give them a sample of how he preaches. But once launched upon his regular collection sermon he becomes caught in the rut of habit, forgets his confession of knavery, and before he knows it is closing with the regulation appeal for money, which a few moments before he has been shamelessly deriding. Incidentally, he is so clever a talker that he comes very near to succeeding in his appeal for

money to the very persons whom he has just warned against his own arts.

Be Sincere.—The final caution in the matter of delivery before the general audience is a counsel repeatedly presented in this book. Be sincere. Do not hide your own personality. Talk to an audience, whoever they may be, with the same direct heartiness and spontaneity that you show in conversation with friends. Take care beforehand to make whatever mental adjustment is necessary for you to achieve this ability to “talk out” plainly. It is the secret of power in communication. You influence the mind of the other man by clear-cut and frank expression of your ideas in terms that he can grasp. This no one can show you how to do, nor is there any magic formula.

But if you are really interested in the subject and in the people you are addressing you will not find it difficult to be frank with the audience. The power of vigorous and clear statement is merely a by-product of the will to discuss acceptably a matter that deserves the attention of an audience. Do not be timid about letting people come over the threshold of your mind. Fear of misunderstanding breeds the thing it would avoid. Cultivate mental hospitality. A child speaks out frankly. He expects you to be responsive and you are.

Lincoln at Cooper Union.—Here is the account of Lincoln’s address at Cooper Institute, New York, on February 27, 1860, in the words of Joseph Choate, himself one of the most gifted speakers of his time, who heard it as a youth :

It is now forty years since I first saw and heard Abraham Lincoln, but the impression which he left upon my mind is ineffaceable. After his great successes in the West he came to New York to make a political address. He appeared in every sense of the word like one of the plain people among whom he loved to be counted. At first sight there was nothing impressive or imposing about him, except that his great stature singled him out from the crowd; his clothes hung awkwardly on his giant frame, his face was of a dark pallor, without the slightest tinge of color; his seamed and rugged features bore the furrows

of hardship and struggle; his deep set eyes looked sad and anxious; his countenance in repose gave little evidence of that brain power which had raised him from the lowest to the highest station among his countrymen; as he talked to me before the meeting, he seemed ill at ease, with that sort of apprehension which a young man might feel before presenting himself to a new and strange audience, whose critical disposition he dreaded. It was a great audience, including all the noted men—all the learned and cultured of his party in New York: editors, clergymen, statesmen, merchants, lawyers, critics. They were all very curious to hear him. His fame as a powerful speaker had preceded him, and exaggerated rumor of his wit—the worst forerunner of an orator—had reached the East. When Mr. Bryant presented him, on the high platform of Cooper Institute, a vast sea of eager faces, upturned, greeted him, full of intense curiosity to see what this rude child of the people was like. He was equal to the occasion. When he spoke he was transformed; his eyes kindled, his voice rang, his face shone and seemed to light up the whole assembly. For an hour and a half he held his audience in the hollow of his hand. His style of speech and manner of delivery were severely simple. What Lowell called "The grand simplicities of the Bible," with which he was so familiar, were reflected in his discourse. With no attempt at ornament or rhetoric, without parade or pretence, he spoke straight to the point. If any came expecting the turgid eloquence or the ribaldry of the frontier, they must have been startled at the sincere purity of his utterances. It was marvelous to see how this untutored man, by mere self disciplining, and the chastening of his own spirit, had outgrown all meretricious arts, and found his own way to the grandeur and strength of absolute simplicity.

That night the great hall, and the next day the whole city rang with delighted applause and congratulation, and he who had come as a stranger departed with the laurels of a great triumph.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE INFORMATION ADDRESS

A Task in "Line of Duty."—Most often, when you are called upon to address a general audience, it is for the purpose of giving information to the audience about some matter of which you have special knowledge. Practically everyone must, now and then, respond to such a call.

What has to be done is not different in nature from what you have probably done many times in the course of your business or professional work, or in connection with club and association duties. It is the duty of the army officer instructing a body of recruits, of the school nurse instructing a conference of mothers, or of the medical expert called in to direct the efforts of a board of sanitation; it is the task of food inspectors, of the engineer or architect before a board of education or the trustees of a town; all have the problem of conveying information to a group of listeners. It is the duty also of a professor in the lecture hall, of a clergyman instructing his congregation on matters of doctrine, of a judge giving a charge to a jury, or of a committee chairman reporting to a club or association. Hundreds of other instances might be cited from practically every walk of life.

The new element is merely that you are to address a group of strangers, a general audience. The convenient little factors of personal association which offer pleasant anchorages for ideas are not available. The speaker has to keep to the middle of the road; the contacts with the audience are along broad lines. Colored by your personality and experience, and relieved by the graces of easy and simple language, the information you have to present may prove not merely welcome but highly valuable.

A Service.—Such an address may be of great benefit to your hearers. You have special knowledge of some matter. By means of the machinery of public address you sum up this matter and convey its essentials to the minds of a thousand others in a hall—or of a million in their homes through the radio. The conception which your listeners obtain from your address of 20 to 60 minutes is something they could obtain in no other way. Not in conversation, because they cannot reach you individually. Not even—in the case of most of them—through reading.

This is true, partly, because so many persons cannot read closely enough to obtain as full a comprehension of the main ideas as they can obtain from listening. When reinforced by the arts of delivery, moreover, the thought of a speaker is illuminated. As noted in Chapter XXII, many persons are ear-minded. In a certain large selling organization it became necessary for a large number of the sales representatives, intelligent and experienced men doing responsible work, to memorize a lengthy sales talk. The problem of *how to memorize* became a serious one. It was found that for about one-third of the men the most economical way of memorizing was through listening to the canvass as read to them by an associate, or by some member of their family.

On the other hand, men who are entirely competent to make an acceptable address sometimes lack facility in writing out their ideas. The persons who can habitually set down information in writing in a form readily intelligible and interesting to ordinary readers, are comparatively few. Professional writers can do it with relative ease, but they give their whole time to such work. For the man or woman engaged in other work, writing for the outside public—the sort of people who make up a general audience—is something to be undertaken only now and then; it is too difficult to be attempted frequently. Yet it is the men and women actually engaged in the world's work who have most to say, from whom other people can learn what they need to know.

Employing a Familiar Medium.—The public address, however, is a medium which such persons can utilize with effect. Anyone of good mind, who has schooled himself in the conversation of business and social life, and who has had the training of the informal public speaking in his club or association, can gain facility in addressing general audiences on topics of his special knowledge.

Your knowledge of your own work, or of the subjects to which you have given special study, is somewhat different from that of anyone else. If you can put into connected words your individual *slant*, or viewpoint, if you can impart to others your dynamic interest in the subject, you are doing something for them which no other person can do. Not, perhaps, because of any fundamental contribution to the subject, or of the minute accuracy of your thinking—but because you know the matter so well that it has become living and *dynamic* in your mind.

Giving Special Information.—And the public address offers a satisfactory vehicle. For it enables you to give your thoughts connectedly in a form that is fairly complete and yet not too lengthy for the power of attention of the ordinary person. It enables you to illuminate and illustrate them by means of the arts of delivery. When you can talk to an audience face to face, the individual listeners are rendered specially attentive and susceptible to impression because they are gathered in a crowd. It is not easy to determine the far-reaching effect of information thus presented, or, on the other hand, to calculate the waste in human affairs, resulting from mismanagement of such addresses.

The Lecture—Yesterday.—Nearly a hundred years ago, when the lyceum or debating society furnished a widely popular form of occupation and entertainment for the long winter evenings, the public lecture came into favor. The present-day wide distribution of books and newspapers was unknown. The awakened hunger for knowledge among the developing millions in

Britain, in the north of Europe, in America, was appeased by the popular lecture. The best speakers of their generation were in constant demand. In America it was the day of Edward Everett's eulogy of Washington—of Rufus Choate's lectures on American History, of Horace Mann's series of lectures on Education, of Wendell Phillips and his famous lecture on "The Lost Arts." The lecture platform was the way to the minds of the people. Causes were there won and lost. It was the council table of the public opinion of the time.

The volumes of "Modern Eloquence,"¹ which you will find on the shelves of your local library, perhaps in the club library, will enable you to recall these days of the popular lecture. In addition to lectures by the eminent Americans just mentioned, you will find a number of others well worth reading. When you have the time look for one or more of the following:

John B. Gough: Social Responsibility

Thomas Wentworth Higginson: Literature in a Republic

Thomas N. Huxley: On a Piece of Chalk

Robert G. Ingersoll: Shakespeare

Robert Collyer: Clear Grit

Edgar Allan Poe: The Poetic Principle

F. Marion Crawford: Pope Leo XIII

Augustine Birrell: Edmund Burke

The Lecture Today.—The lyceum lecture proper passed from the scene in the later nineteenth century. But the public lecture has survived. It was popular in the tents of the Chautauquas. In recent years it has appeared in a new form, and is reaching an audience enormously large. If it is actually given on fewer platforms than in our grandparents' day, thanks to the radio it is delivered to far greater numbers. The accomplished lecturers of our day have audiences beyond the dreams of the giants of early days. The discussion of foods and cookery, the talks on tennis, on swimming, on birds, on conservation of forests and

¹ Modern Eloquences, 15 Volumes, The Modern Eloquence Corporation, New York.

other resources, all given by experts, have a province in the public mind. Audiences await the explorer returned from the far north, or from the ocean deeps, the hunter back from Africa, the scientist from the retirement of his laboratory. We gladly give ear, now as always, to men who can really convey worth-while knowledge.²

More Important Than Ever Before.—In this day of adult education, the lecture—the information address to a general audience—is a highly important form of communication. The various forums, civic associations, and institutes of arts and sciences provide for large memberships, lectures of all kinds, in series, courses and programs of wide range and great merit. The interest in these programs gives some hint of the lengths to which public approval may shortly carry the popular lecture on the radio.

An impressive picture of the nature and scope of educational opportunities of this kind now available for adults in America, as well as Europe, is given in a series of volumes issued by the American Association for Adult Education,³ in particular, "Why Stop Learning?" by Dorothy Canfield Fisher,⁴ and "New Schools for Older Students," by Nathaniel Pepper.⁵

Not Confined to School or College.—We are accustomed to associate the transmission of information mainly with the school and the university. And, in truth, the power to stimulate as well as to inform other minds is the true basis of teaching ability. But this power is by no means a monopoly of the profession of education. The upper ranks of the other "learned" professions and the high places in industry and trade are often won and occupied by men who are great teachers. Naturally their best teaching has been confined to the two or three or a dozen subordinates to

² "America Speaks," a volume recently published by the Modern Eloquence Corporation, gives a number of recent speeches, by men prominent in American life today.

³ The office of the American Association for Adult Education is at 41 East 42nd Street, New York City.

⁴ Dorothy Canfield Fisher, *Why Stop Learning*, Harcourt, Brace & Co.

⁵ Nathaniel Pepper, *New Schools for Older Students*, The Macmillan Co.

whose acquisition of skill they have given time and thought over periods of years. Events may or may not have called for the devotion of this skill to the service of large groups in the form of lectures.

Or it may be their service to large groups is rendered in convention hall and assembly, in the form of "remarks," comments on resolutions, or convention addresses.

In offering an impromptu addition to the report of the Executive Committee of the American Federation of Labor on Wages, John P. Frey—a delegate to the Convention of the Federation, held at Atlantic City in October, 1925—gave a noteworthy commentary on the theory of wages—printed in the Proceedings of the American Federation of Labor (Report of 45th Annual Convention) which has since been quoted widely.

Mr. Frey proposed the following addition to the committee's report: "Social inequality, industrial instability and injustice must increase unless the workers' real wage, the purchasing power of their wages, is advanced in proportion to man's increasing powers of production." In supporting this motion he said:

My purpose in submitting this is because of my belief that the time has come when the position of the trade union movement on the question of wages should be more clearly defined, its philosophy stated and the principle upon which it rests more fully understood.

The first statement of wages that was ever made came from an economist who was positive in his conclusions. When Adam Smith laid down his law of supply and demand he furnished the employers of his generation with what seemed to them a conclusive argument, and when labor demanded higher wages the employers showed them the irresistible law of supply and demand which made it impossible for industry to pay more than it was paying.

Later on John Stuart Mill gave the workers and the employers the "iron law of wages" and again the employers presented wage committees with irresistible proof that it was impossible to increase wages because it would destroy industry. But labor, driven by the spur of necessity, whipped by the lash of industrial justice, continually endeavored to secure a little more of the value which they were creating in the form of wages. The labor movement of Great Britain proved the economists

were not to be relied upon when it came to formulating the economics upon which wages should be based.

In this country and in this movement we have used terms which were not wholly satisfactory. I recall that we spoke of a fair day's wage for a fair day's work, but we never could discover what the fair wage was or what the fair day's work might be, because we differed with our employers. Only within recent years many of our representatives adopted a still more unsound statement of the basis on which wages should be computed—a living wage. I don't know what a living wage is. I am quite sure that the wages the workers in a turpentine camp might consider a living wage would be starvation wages in New York City. It is unfair that we should base our wages on our own conception of our cost of living rather than upon the value of what we are creating.

Another conception was accepted by certain people in this country, and that is, that the worker is entitled to a full return for the value of his services to society. That does not mean anything definite. It merely means that what may be worth so much today would be the basis of our wages, but it might not be worth anything a month from today, or it might be worth more because of some change in our industrial processes. So the time has come when our movement in this country should have a more definite understanding of what the underlying principles will be upon which we will endeavor to secure wages.

A short time ago the Secretary of Commerce issued a statement showing that from 1919 to 1923 the production in our American industries increased nine percent. The census bureau informs us that during the same period the number of those employed in industry decreased three percent, so that during this brief period of four years our capacity to produce has increased almost eleven percent. And why? Because of the greater use of white coal, because of the more scientific arrangement of power units, because of the inventions of machinery, and because of improved methods of marketing. If we continue to increase our capacity to produce as we have since the beginning of the war, unless we are able to consume a much larger proportion of what we produce than we are doing at present, all of these improved methods of productions are working to our injury.

In this addition which I have offered to the report of the Committee on Resolutions, I have incorporated this thought: That the power which nature furnishes must be reflected in the wages we receive in addition to the actual manual and material work which we give to industry, and it is for that reason—because I believe the time has come when we must restate our philosophy of wages and the principle upon which it rests, that I have submitted this addition.

The Material.—In the information address the interest is, of course, always in the material itself; not in entertainment, not in exhortation to action. So fundamental is this preponderance of the material itself that several other factors, common to all forms of group address, seem of lesser importance in this. The speaker may be unkempt in appearance, or even ill at ease in manner; if he can deliver the information desired, he satisfies the audience. His voice may be harsh or weak; if his material is good, the audience will make the effort required to follow his thought. He may be struggling with the peculiarities of a tongue lately acquired; if his information is worth while, his hearers will be patient; they will devote additional “listening energy” to the speaker’s words to make up for his shortcomings. And yet, the value of knowledge and man’s eagerness to acquire it are by no means arguments for neglect. Even the most willing audience is better and more easily served when you take the trouble to conform to the established procedure of learning and instructing. And except for the classroom and the convention of a learned society, where the hearers really constitute a specialist audience, the speaker’s appearance, manner, and utterance are always important. Give your message the advantage of an attractive form.

Now the fact is that there is no type of contact in which observance of the principles of effective communication, as worked out in earlier chapters, is so easy as in the information address to a large group. The situation is far more simple, for example, than in most conversation. The audience is ready to listen. You are presumably ready to speak.

The Problem One of Presentation.—Your task is only a problem of presentation. Your own knowledge of the subject has been gained bit by bit, over a period of years. You have to convey some notion of a matter, perhaps intricate and weighty in nature, to a mixed assembly of persons who have little general knowledge of the subject; whose abilities, temperaments, backgrounds are probably of wide variety. You have to do this in a limited time;

in twenty minutes, or forty; an hour at most. You have to present your thoughts in clear and connected speech. The special problem in this situation is not gathering the material, as you would hardly be giving such a talk outside of the fields you know. It is that of *selection* from the stores of available material, and *arrangement* of what you decide to use. Again, "want of care does us more damage than want of knowledge."

The danger is not so much that you will fail to present sound knowledge as that you may present it in such a fashion that your hearers will fail to receive it. Selection of the items that will make the substance of your address is a matter of thought processes which were treated in general in Chapter XV and in application to the task of preparation in Chapter XXIII. Arrangement is the very tangible and definite product of thought to which we can give special attention here.

Simplicity and Order.—How important the form of presentation is may be observed if we look at a very simple and rudimentary type of information address, the humble announcement. The announcement is an oral notice to a large number of persons. It has the ease of familiar speech and ought to have much of the clearness and precision of the telegram. If it is the announcement of the men's society, made by a clergyman to the congregation, it may have the element of an invitation. Without too obvious a form of repetition the essential elements, such as time, place, and purpose of the meeting, for example, must stand out. Tiresome reiteration will not do. Gracious wording is ever acceptable. Here are two announcements of the same affair made in the presence of a member of the congregation by different clergymen.

You would avoid such a mixed-up statement as this :

On Tuesday evening at eight o'clock there will be a meeting of the men's society in the parish hall . . . at eight o'clock . . . uh . . . for the men of the . . . er-er . . . for the men of the parish, the first meeting of the year . . . eh-ah . . . in the hall at eight o'clock. All of the men are expected to be present, that is, are invited to be

present . . . first get-together of . . . the year, a social meeting . . . no campaign or monetary matters are to be considered. So we expect all of the men to come Tuesday evening.

Here is simplicity and order :

On Tuesday evening we shall have our rally for the men of the parish. All are invited; we hope that all will come. Certainly the preparations being made by the good ladies of the parish indicate that we shall spend a pleasant evening.

The importance of orderliness and simplicity in statement, particularly in directions, orders, and instructions, we have noted in connection with business or professional relationships, in Chapters IV-VI, and in connection with self-training in language for informal group addresses, in Chapter XVI. But in any speech to a good-sized audience of strangers, this requisite of simple orderliness of the thought units, of the parts or items, is of the greatest importance. Whatever other characteristics your information address may have, this one should be manifest in every part of it.

Selection.—In this task of communication you cannot hope to give the audience the same view that you yourself possess. The knowledge which you have was built up slowly and represents in its present character and mass countless modifications, corrections, details, and extensions. You cannot expect to convey any great amount of it to your hearers in the small compass permitted by the occasion. The problem is not like that of shipping goods in cases or barrels, packed to the last possible ounce by mechanical vibrators. There is no vibrator that can speed the job of thought shipping. The shaking down process is useless. The case is one of package delivery over the counter. You must not put in too much. You can put in only what may be wrapped up and carried away.

From the many things that might be said you have to *select* the few that seem to meet the requirements of the audience. And of these you make a second choice of what can be said in the time

at your command. Even if time were available, the inability of the audience to listen with close attention, and to dispose with great rapidity of the many items that complete and exact treatment require would make the effort futile.

The president of a great insurance company once gave a talk on insurance to a group of soldiers in a reconstruction hospital. He gave the history of his company in a compact, well-worded address, that would have held the interest of an audience of middle aged business men. But he did not serve the interests of the young men in that hospital; he did not entertain them; he did not succeed in giving them useful information. He gave them no idea of the significance of insurance, of the importance to the family, to society, of the new species of business which his company had originated. For what he had to say, there was no foundation in the minds of his hearers. He did not select units of thought suited to the audience. He presented more than they could be expected to grasp and make their own.

Suit the Thought to the Audience.—What you really want to do is to give a picture of your thought, and not on a large canvas—rather a miniature—a little sketch in color, with special regard for perspective. Professor Irving Fisher did it in his address at the Trade Union Conference on Elimination of Waste in Industry, held in Philadelphia in 1927. It was a fifteen minute lecture by an expert. There was no mere display of knowledge on the part of the speaker. From his vast store of knowledge he drew only the pertinent illustration, the adequate explanation.

As space does not permit the printing in full of this address by Professor Fisher, we give here a selection of 350 words, in which you will find a model of good presentation:

The Federation of Labor at its Atlantic City Meeting, in 1925, put the new attitude in a nutshell:

"We urge upon management the elimination of waste in production in order that selling prices may be lower and wages higher."

Both the increase of his money wages and the reduction of the prices

which Labor pays increase Labor's real wages, which is the important kind of wages. Anything which lowers cost of production tends either to raise money wages or to lower prices or both.

Why is it so hard to see such an obvious truth? Simply because it is obscured by the complexities of our civilization. There are two great popular fallacies which have beset the uninitiated in economic science. These may be called the *money* fallacy and the *make-work* fallacy.

In each case the fallacy gets its strength from the fact that, in our complex civilization, the individual finds it hard to see much beyond the end of his own nose. The money fallacy confuses money and wealth. After the French Revolution the French Assembly, in 1790, tried to make the French people richer by printing 400,000,000 paper francs, and the enthusiastic speeches showed how these would-be benefactors were entrapped by the deadly money fallacy. The results were, of course, disastrous, as more recently were the inflations of Russia, Germany and other countries.

Yet if Uncle Sam should now print a million paper dollars and make me a present of them, there can be no doubt that I, as an individual, would benefit by a million dollars. Why, then, couldn't Uncle Sam make such a million-dollar present to every man, woman, and child in the United States, so that we would become a nation of millionaires?

The answer to this puzzle is, of course, that I must look beyond the end of my nose. A present to me of a million dollars would benefit me greatly. But it would harm all the rest of the country. Such a present to everyone would raise prices many-fold.

Principles of Selection.—When you regard the field of your subject matter you will find that you may proceed in several different ways: You may *limit the field*, covering only one portion of it in your effort to make presentation; you may *sweep the whole field*, illuminating the high points, or you may *combine these methods*, reviewing the whole field to give perspective, and giving actual treatment to one portion of it.

Principles of Expansion or Development.—What of the method of developing the subject? It is evident that the treatment to be used will vary according to the nature of the audience—whether it is an educated or a popular one; whether or not the

listeners are technically informed on the subject in hand; whether they are youthful or mature; whether men or women, or men and women together. In general, however, it has been found that few audiences, no matter how cultivated or expert, are able to take their information "straight," without some dilution or illustrative matter. The temptation which always besets the speaker, particularly if a subject is of importance to him, is that of talking in generalizations and abstract terms, for fear of being inaccurate—the temptation of the specialist, as noted in Chapter XIII. But the limitations of ear-communication cannot safely be forgotten.

Too Great Compression Unwise.—A year or so ago the officers of a great metropolitan bank found that they were receiving many invitations to give addresses on financial topics before Chambers of Commerce, Rotary Clubs, and other gatherings of business men in their territory. Speech-making was for most of these gentlemen a strange activity. Their first attempts, accordingly, at discussing banking matters before laymen, were not very successful; their addresses were like the written memos to which they were accustomed—accurate, conservative and dry. Their hearers could not understand. They proceeded, accordingly—these men of mature years, nearly all college graduates and experienced in affairs—to study up. With the aid of a man of some experience both in the art and mystery of speaking and in business, they organized among themselves a class in public speaking for bankers. Before long they caught the idea of group presentation, and within a few weeks there was a radical change in the style of their speeches. What they said was still accurate and carefully balanced, both as regards explicit statements of fact and as regards implications, but they were utilizing the devices of selection, of development and explanation of difficult points, of introduction of concrete examples.

Be Concrete—Give Instance or Illustration.—In an address by Major Fred J. Miller, "An Engineer's Attitude Toward

Waste,"⁶ we find few generalizations, little or no abstract statement, but skillful introductions of the concrete instance in reference, illustration or story form. The following analysis will serve to show the course of the thought in the speech, and the way in which that thought was lodged vividly in the minds of the hearers by example and illustration:

"It is really surprising to find out how little is generally known about wages. The subject seems so simple that nearly all of us think we know all there is to know about it. But do we?" (Story of train companion—cost of wages.)

"Averages and percentages are very deceptive things unless we are sure we know how to interpret them in a given case" (Cases: (a) River—average depth of two feet. (b) Fishing Club—members had an average wealth of one million each; one had 50 millions, the others less than a million.)

"It is much the same with figures of wages at different periods and in the same period in different countries. We do not know what they mean unless we know a lot of things other than the mere figures of wages." (Case: Wages of machinists 50 years ago and today—increased threefold.)

(Case: Story of engineer acquaintance who built a house—case of mismanagement at factory.)

"To get away from such mismanagement as that, and as far from that as possible, is the object and effect of what has come to be called scientific management."

(*The Hoover dinner*) ". . . . At that dinner I was surprised and delighted with Mr. Hoover's announcement that, in a recent conference with Samuel Gompers, Mr. Gompers had said that organized labor was ready to cooperate in extending scientific management in the industries of the country.

"As perhaps, a first step toward that end, Mr. Hoover, a little later, suggested that the engineers cooperate in finding out as nearly

⁶ Trade Union Conference on Elimination of Waste in Industry—Philadelphia, April, 1927.

as might be what were the wastes in industry, the extent of them, the nature of them, the cause of them and thus more or less necessarily the remedy for them."

(*Result*—the famous report on "Waste in Industry"—effect of this report.)

("As most of you perhaps know, considerable high indignation was manifested in certain quarters when the report was published, and showed that of the total causes of wastes in industry deficient management was responsible for more than twice as much as labor was responsible for—management responsible for over 50 per cent and labor responsible for less than 25 per cent of the total wastes")

(*Detail explanation.* Increase of maintenance and operating costs—a part of the reason for increased wages. *Example*—boy using speed lathe to make small screws and one man running four automatics.)

"A word about mass production it cannot be used everywhere but scientific management can be used in every industry."

"So long as man retains the power to reason and to think, improved methods of doing things will be devised. It is not the thinkers who prevent the workers from getting their share of the joint product of labor and capital"

"I am greatly encouraged by such things as are now being done in the shops of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad especially, where the company and the men have united to eliminate waste and to promote their mutual interests. According to all reports that have come to my notice, the agreement and the plan are working to the substantial satisfaction of both sides."

"It is claimed and believed by some that the strike spirit, the riot spirit, Bolshevism and what not, are infectious or contagious. Perhaps they are; but I believe, on the other hand, that right and fair dealing are also contagious, and I venture to hope they will prove in the long run to be more contagious than the opposite things. I can scarcely believe that the Baltimore & Ohio example will not be followed by other railroads, and that a time is coming when our waste-

ful, destructive and senseless contentions and bludgeon methods of settling, or rather trying to settle, industrial matters will have disappeared and reasonableness will have been enthroned in their places."

In general what you have to do is to give more illustration than text. In many effective addresses four or five elements of illustration are employed for every one of statement. This was true of the speech of Professor Fisher, cited above. Whenever you hear a speech you will find it worth while to note the use of illustrative material.

Stories? If They Serve a Purpose.—Stories which illumine a truth are particularly valuable. They supply the human touches that correspond to the contacts in life about us. We are made to observe with the eyes and mind of another what has actually happened. The speaker is not giving us his view, he is rather reporting for us. Here is an excellent example of such a story from a speech by Spencer Miller, Jr., Secretary of the Workers' Education Bureau, on "Workers' Education and Industrial Progress."

When labor was confronted with the task of its own savings and with the mobilizing of credit power it gave the most unmistakable answer by the establishment of its own banks. When later it was faced with the problem of insurance it gave an equally effective answer in the establishment of its own insurance company. I believe that labor in America has the power and the vision to embark on a similar venture with workers' education—not selfishly, but in a spirit of a larger and more constructive service to its own membership, to industry, and to the welfare of the entire country.

Let me cite a single example of what may be accomplished. In the eastern part of the state of Ohio there is a small town by the name of *West Lafferty*; a mining community of a single store, a mine pit and simple homes, housing perhaps 300 souls, with meagre school facilities.

Outwardly we might consider this town poor in its cultural opportunities. But actually this is not the case, for in that town there is a single miner, William Neely by name, who never even finished the 5th grade, but who has caught the spirit of learning, and has become a power in his community. Two years ago he wanted to go to the resident college at Brookwood, but the death of his father prevented it. So he was

determined to bring the world of knowledge to West Lafferty. Our Workers' Education Bureau has been supplying him with books and study suggestions and twice a week the faithful have gathered over Miners' Hall in West Lafferty to study American labor history and public discussion. During the summer the same groups have met together to study and prepare themselves to be better citizens and better miners and better union members. And I say to you that the town of West Lafferty is a happier community, the United Mine Workers of America is a stronger union, and the American Democracy is a finer democracy, because of these humble efforts of the miners of West Lafferty. . . .

This is the spirit of Workers' Education which is being duplicated in hundreds of remote places in America.

Skillful speakers do not use a story merely for entertainment. They make it carry a point. The illustration or concrete instance may often survive in the minds of hearers as the vehicle of information long after the other thoughts and their statement have been lost. If your listener remembers that you told the story of "Big Jack" and can repeat the story, the chances are that your efforts had real effect.

Order Suited to Listeners.—As regards order of arrangement, it may be said: Try to place yourself in the position of the listener. Suppose yourself uninformed on this subject under discussion, and in the circumstances of this occasion, what would you want to know first? What second? And so on? Bear in mind that a general audience cannot be expected to have much of a background for your subject; that taken as a body the audience lacks power to concentrate carefully and intensely while listening; and finally that the time is short.

In the information address you speak to instruct, or as the dictionary puts it: "Impart knowledge and skill." It tells us also that the word *instruct* comes from the Latin *in*, in and *struo*, to build. When you actually "build in" the portion of knowledge you have planned to convey, your speaking is effective. "Let him who would instruct others consider how he himself learns," said an ancient philosopher.

Giving Information—Begin with Definition of Terms.—

One sure beginning for “building-in” is to find out, by means of questions, what those you purpose to instruct already know about a matter. The speaker, it is true, cannot proceed literally to question his audience, but he can calculate in advance the questions which will probably arise in their minds, and he can begin by clearing up these points. Since the whole process depends upon the common medium of the language, the speaker may wish to avoid confusion by defining, at the very start, the key words or terms that he must use in presenting his subject. In doing this he gives answer to certain possible questions that *might* arise in the minds of his hearers.

Speaking at the annual meeting of the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York, November 18, 1890, the late Charles William Eliot, then President of Harvard University, began in this way:

Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Chamber of Commerce: Before we can talk together to advantage about the value of education in business, we ought to come to a common understanding about the sort of education we mean and the sort of business. Nobody doubts that primary and grammar school training are useful to everybody; or that high school training is advantageous for a clerk, salesman, commercial traveler, or skilled workman; or that technical or scientific school training is useful to an engineer, chemist, electrician, mechanic or miner. Our question is of what use is the education called “liberal” to a man of business? The education called liberal has undergone a great expansion during our generation. . . .

We must not think of the liberal education of to-day as dealing with a dead past—with dead languages, buried peoples, and exploded philosophies. . . .

And what sort of business do we mean? Surely the larger sorts of legitimate and honorable business; that business which is of advantage both to buyer and seller, and to producer, distributor, and consumer alike, whether individuals or nations, which makes common some useful thing that has been rare, or makes accessible to masses good things which have been within reach only of the few. . . .

Another excellent device for the opening is the presentation

in description or narration, of some concrete item that is also typical. One of Huxley's remarkable lectures on scientific topics for popular audiences, "A Piece of Chalk," begins thus with a highly concrete example:

If a well were sunk at our feet in the midst of the city of Norwich, the diggers would very soon find themselves at work in that white substance almost too soft to be called rock, with which we are all familiar as "chalk."

Not only here, but all over the whole county of Norfolk, the well-sinker might carry his shaft down many hundred feet without coming to the end of the chalk; and, on the sea-coast, where the waves have pared away the face of the land which breasts them, the scarped faces of the high cliffs are often wholly formed of the same material. Northward, the chalk may be followed as far as Yorkshire; on the south coast it appears abruptly in the picturesque western bays of Dorset, and breaks into the Needles of the Isle of Wight; while on the shores of Kent it supplies that long line of white cliffs to which England owes the name of Albion.

Were the thin soil which covers it all washed away, a curved band of white chalk, here broader, and there narrower, might be followed diagonally across England from Lulworth in Dorset, to Flamborough Head in Yorkshire—a distance of over two hundred and eighty miles as the crow flies.

Order by Means of Division.—It is well next to give a brief and clear outline of the whole case, summarized under a few general headings, three, four or five. A larger number of main points puts a strain upon the listener's power of comprehension and retention. In the brief analysis which we are able to print here, of the lecture delivered by Mr. Ramsay Muir, sometime Professor of Modern History at the University of Manchester, before the Alumni Council of Amherst College, in November of 1926, note how the order is revealed:

THE DANGERS OF HISTORICAL TEACHING

THEME: Historical teaching is a dangerous necessary trade which we can carry on successfully only by knowing its dangers and how to guard against them.

DEVELOPMENT:

I. Popular ideas exercise great power. (Topic Part I)

A. Race memories and their effects

1. Hungarian
2. Serbian
3. Scottish

B. Race memories as sources of national antipathies

1. Case of the English

Better no popular knowledge of history than the kind which breeds misunderstanding. (Conclusion I)

II. Responsibility of providing knowledge about the past rests not mainly on teachers and writers, but on scholars who create the body of knowledge summarized in text-books and on public authorities who control systems of education. (Topic Part II)

A. Scholars may err. Examples:

1. German philologists' notion of racialism
2. Modern "Nordic" notion

B. Scientific historians may give political interpretation to historical facts. Example:

1. Historians of modern Germany in later 19th Century

C. Teachers may make foes of neighbor peoples. Example:

1. Case of France and Germany

The work of teachers who handle such inflammable stuff is dangerous work. The responsibility of the scholars who feed them with material, and the public authorities who dictate how this material is to be used, is a heavy responsibility. (Conclusion II)

III. The danger of historical teaching can be further illustrated.

A. The case of India, a detailed analysis

1. The situation—
 - (a) The past
 - (b) The divided people
 - (c) Their aspirations
2. Two episodes—
 - (a) Young Bengali in Delhi
 - (b) Boy of eastern Bengal

B. The case of England and America

1. Attitudes of two nations
2. Popular knowledge of history in England, and in America

Of a truth the teaching of history is a dangerous trade; so dangerous that I am sometimes tempted to the pessimistic conclusion that it had better be dropped altogether until we can put it in the hands of a staff of omniscient, forgiving, and humorous archangels. (Conclusion III and Conclusion of Speech)

Then take up each of the main points and develop it simply and clearly. If possible follow much the same order of development for all of the points. Such uniformity of structure of the successive sections assists the listener to pack each away in order, and to bear in mind its relation to what precedes and follows it. What was said in Chapter V of the arrangement of reports applies here also.

It is helpful also to mark the transitions very plainly, indicating at each step; first, what has been covered; second, what next is to be covered. The counsel of the darky preacher in Chapter XV is especially to be borne in mind in connection with an information address.

In persuasive speeches, where the ultimate general impression is your main concern, it may not be desirable to stop to mark the road, point by point. With an information address, however, this is of the greatest importance. Each point should be fitted to those which have gone before, and at each advance the listener should be shown the direction in which he is going, and the distance.

At the close it is wise to give either a literal summary, a recapitulation, or another illustration or story that is really typical. The story by Spencer Miller, Jr., on page 431 is the conclusion of his speech.

Addresses to Specialist Audiences.—In meetings of scientific societies a man speaks to his peers; so it is in professional associations. The problem of adjustment causes the speaker comparatively little trouble. The interest of the listeners is a certainty.

The speaker sets his own findings before men who are engaged in his own field, who know as much as he, or even more. His manner is informal, unassuming, but definite. His treatment is orderly; his language is concise—he uses a specialized vocabulary. Huxley was a master of this scientific method of presentation as well as of the more “popular” style already illustrated. The following is also from his “Coral Reefs”:

The coral mud which occupies the bottom of the lagoon, and with which all the interstices of the coral skeletons which accumulate to form the coral reef are filled up, does not proceed from the washing action of the waves alone; innumerable fishes and other creatures which prey upon the coral, add a very important contribution of finely triturated calcareous matter; and the corals and mud becoming incorporated together, gradually harden and give rise to a sort of limestone rock, which may vary a good deal in texture. Sometimes it remains friable and chalky, but more often the infiltration of water, charged with carbonic acid, dissolves some of the calcareous matter, and deposits it elsewhere in the interstices of the nascent rock, thus glueing and cementing the particles together into a hard mass; or it may even dissolve the carbonate of lime more extensively, and redeposit it in a crystalline form. On the beach of the lagoon, where the coral sand is washed into layers by the action of the waves, its grains become thus fused together into strata of a limestone, so hard that they ring when struck with a hammer, and inclined at a gentle angle, corresponding with that of the surface of the beach. The hard parts of the many animals which live upon the reef become embedded in this coral limestone, so that a block may be full of shells of bivalves and univalves, or of sea-urchins; and even sometimes encloses the eggs of turtles in a state of petrification. The active and vigorous growth of the reef goes on only at the seaward margins; where the polypes are exposed to the wash of the surf, and are thereby provided with an abundant supply of air and of food. The interior portion of the reef may be regarded as almost wholly an accumulation of dead skeletons. Where a river comes down from the land there is a break in the reef, for the reasons which have been already mentioned.

University Lectures, Classroom Lectures.—The university lecture, a specific unit in formal instruction, requires but brief comment here. An acknowledged and licensed master instructs a

selected audience. Yet, even in a university, as thousands of students will testify, knowledge of the subject will not by itself insure successful lectures. A commentary upon the inefficiency of much of society's formal procedure of instruction might be found in the colloquialism: "Don't lecture me!" Lectures can be dreary affairs, just as can other types of discourse, and for the same reason—lack of adjustment to the listeners. Many highly respected professors, who have attained eminence for a profound knowledge of their subjects, fail to adapt their talk to other minds. It is another instance of the failure of the professional man, the technician, in handling his "service talk."

But many university lectures are excellent. And when the happy combination of abilities has been developed in the professor who is sympathetic in his attitude to the men and women of his classes, tribute is immediate and lasting. The man is more important than "his stuff." Hundreds of students will talk about scheduling "Uncle Charles on bugs," or tell you they were so lucky as to "get a seat for Prexy on the past." If you are acquainted with this form of communication, you will realize that one quotation conveys the fact that certain students have arranged a program that enables them to take the course of an eminent biologist; that others have succeeded in gaining a place in the class of the president of the university who is a historian of note.

Woodrow Wilson on Adam Smith.—There is a wealth of power in the studied discourse of strong men. Woodrow Wilson, himself a university lecturer of power and charm, has this to say in his article entitled "An Old Master," which deals with the "father of political economy," Adam Smith.

Why has not one ever written on the art of academic lecturing and its many notable triumphs? In some quarters new educational canons have spoken an emphatic condemnation of the college lecture, and it would seem to be high time to consider its value, as illustrative of an art about to be lost, if not as exemplary of forces to be retained, even if modified. Are not our college classrooms, in being robbed of the old-time lecture, and getting instead a science brief of data and bibliography,

being deprived also of that literary atmosphere that once pervaded them? We are unquestionably gaining in thoroughness; but are we gaining in thoughtfulness? We are giving to many youths an insight, it may be profound, into specialties; but are we giving any of them a broad outlook?

Lecturers All Enjoy.—Some great scholars are able to lecture thus to general audiences. And always, when they know how to convey their message, they find the same eager response. No one enjoys—least of all young students—attending an exhibition or display of dry knowledge. But all enjoy contact with a man who knows his subject, stands as a leader in his field and yet takes the trouble to discuss a phase of it with us; and we are not unmindful of the profit for us. We go, not to hear a lecture on Astronomy, but rather to hear Professor Sagittarius “talk about the stars.” When the master of a subject knows how to make his material interesting to people who sit before him, to talk in a personal and natural way, passing over minor matters, and to refrain from telling too much, he performs a service that is invaluable. He supplies a point of view which enables us to look with his eyes upon a matter of interest or importance.

Such a lecturer was Josiah Royce, Professor of Philosophy at Harvard. His subjects were technical. He neither ornamented them nor cheapened them. Because he knew how the human mind operates he was able to say that which carried the significance of his thought to people who had little special knowledge. He seemed interested in the audience. A third rate scholar may talk of his specialty with an attitude of solemnity if not of cold aloofness. Professor Royce, in the first rank of his profession, talked with infectious enthusiasm.

We are only beginning to visualize the possibilities of useful and interesting information addresses that exist in the intelligent men and women in active life. Lawyer, physician, merchant, engineer, accountant, manufacturer, railroad man, banker, insurance broker—not one but has within him the resources for interesting and useful addresses of the kind.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE PLEA FOR A CAUSE

The Driving Power of a "Cause."—It is quite likely that your first "speech" before a club or other body was really a plea for a cause. You wanted the group to change its meeting night—you tried to persuade the club to give up the idea of a big new clubhouse—or you told the taxpayers' association what you thought of the projected public automobile camp. Perhaps you did not realize that you were talking to an audience; you simply wanted to get something done or to prevent ill-advised action. What carried you through at the time was your fervor, your earnestness, your will power. Your "speaking" was merely the medium for releasing your support or your opposition—a somewhat unconscious medium for a very direct expression of that which has stirred you deeply.

That is the way of "causes." An opportunity suddenly presents itself, and thoughts that have been ready in the mind for years, conclusions reached after months of study or reflection, of struggle with problems, demand utterance. We do battle for the cause. We want others to believe as we do, to see the truth as we see it; perhaps we go further, and seek to get them to act in accordance with a certain conclusion or judgment.

All your life you will find occasions for pleas of one sort or another. They will arise from the common associations of the community, politics, religion, industry, trade, and the professions, in most cases without previous warning. You will be impelled to speak. You will want to make your point. Your obligation is to the cause that moves you. Your utterance is on motion of your own, so to speak, not a matter of invitation as in the case of the usual information address.

The Greatest Speeches of History Were Pleas.—The speech itself, remember, is secondary, incidental, in the struggle for a cause to which a man has given his mind and heart. The great speeches of Demosthenes that have been read and reread for two thousand years, and that still hold a place in the sturdy academic training of the schools of the old order, were not mere oratorical flights. They were primarily the instruments used by a statesman fighting for a certain political ideal, seeking to arouse his countrymen, to make them realize the danger to their country from the ambition of the monarchy of Macedon.

Similarly, the speeches of Pitt, of John Wilkes, of Edmund Burke, were part of a campaign in Parliament to save the fresh young empire abroad from the effects of arrogance and ignorance at home, to put a stop to the sorry treatment of Englishmen by Englishmen. One of the masterpieces of the Roman orator, Cicero, *Pro Archias*, was a defence in court of law of the orator's friend, Archias the poet. But in this speech, Cicero not only performed the conventional function of his calling, but in the course of his address, he took occasion to present a plea for the finer side of life, for the arts in general and for the art of the poet in particular. When the British Parliament assembled January 14, 1766, William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, who had been absent on account of illness for about a year, listened with strong disapproval to the King's speech from the throne. For many years Pitt had studied conditions in America, but he was not familiar with the official calendar and did not know that American taxation would come up for discussion. When the King in his speech reasserted the right to tax America, Pitt seized upon the opportunity of the moment and spoke extempore for what he considered the cause of justice and right. He spoke with the force that characterized his utterances and with the authority that belongs to men who know what they are talking about.

Occasions Varied and Numerous.—At a later day, in our own country, the invitation to speak at the annual dinner of the

New England Society in New York, in 1886, gave Henry W. Grady, at that time part owner and editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*, an opportunity to deliver the address which we know as "The New South." The newspapers printed his speech the next morning. It was reprinted or quoted all over the country. By his speech at that dinner, Grady hoped to be of service in bringing about better understanding between the sections. The effect of his words and the acclaim with which they were read and reprinted everywhere, led him to speak many times on similar topics. His was the leading voice in the cause of national reconciliation between the sections.

At Fordham University some years ago, the late Martin Glynn, then Governor of the State of New York, took occasion in addressing the graduating class of the college to point out the need for more of the educated young men of this country to enter politics. He mentioned the variety of opportunity that this field offers to the young man in a country such as ours and referred with scorn to the attitude of those "who turn up the nose" at "dirty politics"; who affect a well-bred contempt for the actual work of the government; who point out the all too-evident evils, but who lift no hand—who at times even cast no vote to remedy conditions.

Governor Brewster of Maine to the Engineers.—In the summer of 1927 the Society for Promotion of Engineering Education, representing the engineering colleges throughout the country, held its annual convention at the University of Maine. The meeting was particularly concerned with questions of changes in the curriculum in view of the wider responsibilities now being laid by society upon the engineering profession. At the annual dinner, Governor Brewster of Maine, a lawyer and formerly professor in the university law school, addressed the engineers. He, too, dwelt upon the fact that the function of administering society's enterprises, private and public, long carried by the legal profession, is now being transferred in large measure to the

engineers. He closed with a grave reminder to his hearers of the solemn responsibility which attends a great public duty, that of guarding adequately at all times, the rights of the individual citizen.

As you assume this prerogative of the courts, the highest and greatest responsibility in administering justice between our fellowmen, you must take the same basis of civic service that has been the ideal and the goal of those leaders in our jurisprudence who have served so well in the centuries of our very simple past.

That is why we here in the State of Maine, struggling with this problem of power, rejoice that you gentlemen and ladies are assembling to consider the problems of engineering education, devoting yourselves for this time to determining how the youth of America may be better prepared to serve. Speaking from one profession now passing rapidly into innocuous desuetude, to this other great profession that in this last generation has come so conspicuously to the fore, I can but say that you will do well to give emphasis in proper measure not merely to the technical preparation, but to the cultural and character development which can alone enable this mighty mechanism of modern civilization to survive. It is the "Spirit of St. Louis," without Lindbergh at the helm, if we shall turn over to our children all this great heritage of modern civilization without that birthright of spiritual truth that guided America for three centuries as we moved to a position of pre-eminence among the nations of the earth. Turn your thought on occasion to things other than the immediate economic laws with which you are properly concerned.¹

The occasions for utterances of this kind do not come often to any man. But when the moment does come, you will want to be able to bear your part well; to carry your point; to get action. Certainly you do not want to lose your case through clumsiness or poor technique.

Comprehensive Knowledge.—You need full and accurate knowledge. You have to satisfy the minds of many others with evidence, with facts and circumstances upon which to base the conclusions you would have them draw for the furtherance of your cause. To this end you must neglect no means to add to

¹ Printed in the *Journal of Engineering Education*, October, 1927.

your command of the facts the very latest developments and happenings that have a bearing on the cause for which you speak. But to be supplied merely with the intelligence of the hour will not do. You need all the light of the past for the interpretation of the freshest evidence.

You may recall Edmund Burke's remark in the second paragraph of his address on "Conciliation with the Colonies."

Surely it is an awful subject, or there is none so on this side of the grave. When I first had the honor of a seat in this House, the affairs of that continent pressed themselves upon us as the most important and the most delicate object of parliamentary attention. My little share in this great deliberation oppressed me. I found myself a partaker in a very high trust; and having no sort of reason to rely on the strength of my natural abilities for the proper execution of that trust, I was obliged to take more than common pains *to instruct myself in everything which relates to our colonies*. I was not less under the necessity of forming some fixed ideas concerning the general policy of the British Empire. Something of this sort seems indispensable, in order, amidst so vast a fluctuation of passions and opinions, to center my thoughts, to ballast my conduct, to preserve me from being blown about by every wind of fashionable doctrine. I really did not think it safe or manly to have fresh principles to seek upon every fresh mail which should arrive from America.

It was Charles James Fox who urged the members of Parliament "to peruse the Speech of Conciliation again and again, to study it, to imprint it on their minds, to impress it on their hearts." Burke's habit of "winding his way into a subject like a serpent" was fully recognized by his contemporaries. Fox is said to have remarked that he learned more by listening to Burke, than by any other means, in his whole experience.

Gompers Relied on Facts.—The late Samuel Gompers, long established in the public mind as an expert in labor affairs, whose opinions were sought and whose death was lamented in lands beyond our own, never failed to rest his cause upon the acknowledged facts in a case. If you never had the opportunity to hear one of the speeches of Samuel Gompers you will find it interesting

to look into the files of the American Federationist or other labor papers. Recall as you read, the fact that they represent not only the mastery of a field of information complex and difficult in itself, and sound thought, but the conquest of the English tongue by the son of Dutch Jews, born in poverty in London, and an emigrant to the United States at the age of fourteen.

Establishing the Speaker's Place.—If you are already established in the public mind as an authority on the subject, the matter of adjustment is less difficult. There is a presumption in your favor, in the mind of the audience. It may be advisable for the speaker at the outset to refer to his own position in order to justify his own connection with the subject, to satisfy any possible question as to the propriety of his discussion of the subject. You will find in the first eight paragraphs of Burke's Conciliation a famous example of this, in a form that makes it a text in itself on this point. For if a man can show with due modesty that he deserves to be heard on the subject, he has already satisfied one of the conditions for effective pleading. Henry W. Grady did it at the dinner of the New England Society, in 1886, with a single phrase of reference, "the first Southerner to speak at this board," a remark which established the full significance of his presence.

In his speech before the Chamber of Commerce in New York, in May, 1917, on "The Cooperation of English-speaking Peoples," Sir Arthur Balfour, head of the British Mission to the United States, said:

My friend Mr. Choate, in a speech that he delivered yesterday at the City Hall, told his audience that as Ambassador to Great Britain he had been in close official relations with me through many years, and that during all of these years I had stood solid—I think that was his phrase—for American friendship. That is strictly and absolutely true, and the feelings that I have this great opportunity of expressing are not born, believe me, of the necessities of the Great War; they are not the offspring of recent events; they are based upon my most enduring convictions, convictions of which I cannot remember the beginnings, which I have held with unfaltering fidelity through the political life which is now a long life, and which, I am quite sure, I shall cherish to the end.

In his last address, at the Annual Convention of the American Federation of Labor in El Paso, Texas, 1924, speaking on the subject, "The Voluntary Basis of Trade Unionism," Samuel Gompers reviewed the history of the labor movement in this country, from its beginning as a national movement forty-four years before at Pittsburgh. He then said:

Men and women of our American trade union movement, I feel that I have earned the right to talk plainly with you. As the only delegate to that first Pittsburgh convention who has stayed with the problems of our movement through to the present hour, as one who with clean hands and with singleness of purpose has tried to serve the labor movement honorably and in a spirit of consecration to the cause of humanity, I want to urge devotion to the fundamentals of human liberty—the principles of voluntarism. No lasting gain has ever come from compulsion. If we seek to force, we but tear apart that which, united, is invincible. There is no way whereby our labor movement may be assured sustained progress in determining its policies and its plans other than sincere democratic deliberation until a unanimous decision is reached. This may seem a cumbrous, slow method to the impatient, but the impatient are more concerned for immediate triumph than for the education of constructive development.

Gaining Contact: A Common Bond.—Suppose you have decided upon the considerations which you will present to justify your speaking on the subject. You have still to find a common ground, a bond of sympathy, a point of contact, between your mind and those of the audience. It may be a reference to some recent happening or it may be a reminder of a fundamental truth. You may find a connection that is at once simple and direct. In his Cooper Institute Speech before the Young Men's Republican Club in New York City, which did much to unify anti-slavery sentiment in the North, Lincoln found a very simple but effective way of reaching this common ground. Though he had grown in fame as the result of the debates with Douglas, he was a stranger to the people of his own party in New York. Accordingly, he began his speech as follows:

Mr. President [William Cullen Bryant] and fellow citizens of New

York: The facts with which I shall deal this evening are mainly old and familiar; nor is there anything new in the general use I shall make of them. If there shall be any novelty, it will be in the mode of presenting the facts, and the inferences and observations following that presentation. In his speech last autumn at Columbus, Ohio, as reported in the *New York Times*, Senator Douglas said:

"Our fathers, when they framed the government under which we live, understood this question just as well, and even better than we do now."

I fully endorse this, and I adopt it as a text for this discourse. I so adopt it because it furnishes a precise and agreed starting point for a discussion between Republicans and that wing of the Democracy headed by Senator Douglas. It simply leaves the inquiry: What was the understanding those fathers had of the question mentioned?

What is the frame of government under which we live? The answer must be, "The Constitution of the United States." That Constitution consists of the original, framed in 1787, and under which the present government first went into operation, and twelve subsequently framed amendments, the first ten of which were framed in 1789.

Who were our fathers that framed the Constitution? I suppose the "thirty-nine" who signed the original instrument may be fairly called our fathers who framed that part of the present government. It is almost exactly true to say they framed it, and it is altogether true to say they fairly represented the opinion and sentiment of the whole nation at that time. Their names, being familiar to nearly all, and accessible to quite all, need not now be repeated.

I take these "thirty-nine" for the present, as being "our fathers who framed the government under which we live." What is the question which, according to the text, those fathers understood "just as well, and even better, than we do now"? It is this: Does the proper division of local from Federal authority or anything in the Constitution, forbid our Federal Government to control as to slavery in our Federal territories?

Upon this Senator Douglas holds the affirmative and Republicans the negative. This affirmation and denial form an issue; and this issue, this question—is precisely what the text declares our fathers understood "better than we." Let us now inquire whether the "thirty-nine" or any of them, ever acted upon this question; and if they did, how they acted upon it—how they expressed that better understanding. . . .

The sum of the whole is that of our thirty-nine fathers who framed the original constitution, twenty-one—a clear majority of the whole—veritably understood that no proper division of local from Federal authority, nor any part of the Constitution, forbade the Federal Government to control slavery in the Federal Territories; while all the rest had

probably the same understanding. Such unquestionably, was the understanding of our fathers who framed the original Constitution; and the text affirms that they understood the question "better than we."

It may be that you will have prejudice to face, and that an angle of view which involves no possible bias must be found if you are to hope for any success at all. This Grady did in his speech on "The New South," by presenting to the audience a picture of the South in terms of certain appeal to all men and women: home and family.

Presenting Your Appeal.—You would not do battle for a field already won. To win others you have need of all your skill; to see the cause in all its relations; to see it as others may see it and to make allowance for their seeing it that way; to discover the place where minds may meet; to contrive a plan that will move those other minds, by way of familiar truths and irresistible facts, to the point from which there is no retreat and no departure save by the way of your solution—the conviction you wish them to reach, the action you would have them take. You want to be able to present a sound and forceful argument in terms readily acceptable to the audience in the case.

Conviction and Persuasion.—Consider the forms in which men display their efforts to convince and persuade other men. In deliberative assemblies, men seek to formulate laws; to fashion government; to solve problems; to meet emergencies; to remedy evils; to improve conditions. In courts of law, attorneys plead with judge or with judge and jury the case of a client; and judge and jury attempt decision in terms of the law, or by interpretation of the law, that justice may be served for the benefit of all. In the pulpit men of religion expound and defend elements of their faith; plead with the laity for the causes of faith or doctrine; exhort their congregations to lives in harmony with the tenets of that faith. In the classroom, teachers persuade young men and young women to study, to read, to think, to discipline

their minds. On the public platform, men of every creed and calling seek to mold public opinion; to convince the people—to make them see the truth, understand a wrong, discern an evil, recognize a good, and when the time is ripe they seek to persuade the people to right the wrong, to root out the evil, to accept the good.

In all of these cases, the speaker seeks to bring his hearers to a certain state of mind. In some of them, he goes further; his purpose is to move them to action. In the one, his message is: "You ought to realize that this is true." In the other, "You ought to realize that this is true; that you ought to do something about it; that this is the thing to do."

To attain this end, the speaker employs the form of discourse we call "argument." So important is this form of communication that many books have been written to explain it. Samples of argumentation are available on every hand. Space will permit us to mention here only the main features of an argument, such as you will wish to embody in a speech for a cause.

Planning the Argument: The Substance.—You will get ready in much the same way as you would for any other public utterance, but the "plan and substance" of your speech will have certain characteristics peculiar to this form of discourse. The nature of these peculiarities will plainly show the corresponding elements in their preparation.

In the first place, the theme of your speech, expressing the truth you would have your audience accept, the decision you would have them make, the solution you offer, the action you propose, is more accurately called the *proposition*. The proof you have prepared and organized, is the substance of your *argument*. The two or three main parts of your argument will result in minor propositions, the main points in your discourse, called *issues*.

You reduce your main proposition by this means to several component propositions, each of which you prove in turn, thereby establishing the truth or expediency of the main proposition.

Within the treatment of each issue, you will want to justify certain significant statements, which are generally called *inferences*—drawn from the facts you are using as proof. The objections which your opponents might offer, you *refute*, or, in other words, you disprove. An objection, stated in the negative, simply becomes one of your issues.

The Introduction.—The introduction to an argument must do more than establish a line of communication between speaker and audience. It must do more than arrest attention and invite interest. It must prepare the minds of the hearers for a clear and comprehensive view of the cause. To this end the speaker will find it useful to tell about the origin of the cause he pleads, the question he propounds; to give the history of the question; to define carefully the important terms to be used in the discussion; to exclude from the discussion considerations of no material importance; to tell just where the ground of difference in opinion lies; to indicate if it seems advisable the issues at stake. Obviously the situation will enable the speaker to decide how far he ought to satisfy all or any of the considerations just enumerated. Common sense must rule. These are simply the points which men have found it advisable to cover for their audiences, either before presenting the argument itself, or, as circumstances may require, during the argument.

To give adequate treatment to the complexities and subtleties of argument is no part of the purpose of this book. It is a subject in itself. There are good texts available. You may have on your own shelves the best of all texts—the recorded pleas and arguments of masters. You will find it profitable to read and to study the models at hand: the Lincoln-Douglas Debate, Webster's "Reply to Hayne," Burke's Conciliation.

The plea, like any other speech, is so much a matter of the moment, so thoroughly a product of all the elements, tangible and intangible, of the situation which calls it forth, that it is almost impossible to give specific precepts. You may find help,

however, in reviewing certain characteristics of speeches of this type.

Preparation.—Your purpose is to convince; perhaps to persuade. The cause itself provides you with the “line” of your speech. The facts in the case, the evidence, the opinions and principles that you will present, form the substance of your speech, and the course that your reasoning about these facts and principles must take, to make your contention acceptable in your audience, will be your plan.

Gathering and Selecting Material.—Your preparation will follow the course suggested in Chapter XXIII. If you use cards, your final packages will be two or three in which you have arranged the supporting evidence and reasoning for the contentions which you have made your issues. The outline, if you make one, will indicate the structure of the argument in detail. Under each issue will appear the inferences which support it; for each inference, there will be the facts, the evidence, the generally accepted principles which support it; under each fact, opinion or element of proof, its proper source or authority. This outline is called a brief. In its specialized and detailed form, the lawyer’s brief, is equivalent to the architect’s plan. By looking at the architect’s plans and specifications, the builder is able to picture the structure in all its details. By reading the lawyers’ briefs, the judge can review the arguments on both sides, weigh the proofs, and settle or decide the case. Many great speeches of this order have been delivered, of course, without this element of formal preparation at the time, but not without the training and practice of many previous efforts. The next time you have an argument with a friend or acquaintance on a subject of general concern, sit down when you get home and draw up the brief for the case that you presented. If you were to debate the matter with that friend a second time, what changes should you make in the plan and arrangement of your discussion; in the evidence used? If you were

called upon to address a public gathering on the same proposition, how should you modify the brief?

Briefing the Speeches of Others.—It will be helpful now and then to draw a brief for the speech of another person you have just heard, or of which you have the text before you. Read Burke's speech on Conciliation and draw a brief for that. Then get hold of a student's edition of the speech and compare your own brief with that which you will find in the notes to the text. This form of study is not arduous and it is practical. You learn to calculate the comparative value of this point or that; to regard the effect of an order or arrangement that you would not have thought of using; to realize how often experience provides a man with the sinews of argument; to recognize the peculiar power of a phrase; to become acquainted with the nature and dangers of digressions and interpolations. Any time you can give to the practice of briefing will more than repay your effort. One thing you will learn from it, if no other, namely, how to concentrate on your main point; to hold to your objective; to keep to your "line."

Deciding Upon a Pattern.—A good plea should have a suitable logical structure. It will be clear in analysis and division. The parts will have a natural sequence. The order of reasoning will be simple.

If you propose an innovation, a new policy, a new measure, the burden of proof is on you. Some such general pattern arrangement as the following may help to keep your case clear:

Evils exist— (*Specify them*)

They ought to be remedied.

The measures in force have failed.

Certain remedies have been proposed.

Of these the most practical is— (*Add proof*)

We ought to employ this proposed remedy.

If you speak to maintain a measure already yielding safe and good results, the presumption is in your favor; the burden of

proof is on your opponents who propose a change. You can employ this characteristic pattern of defense of the existing order :

The present measure is satisfactory and successful.

The evils that exist are not inherent in the measure in force.

They can be remedied without the risk of changing a proved measure for an uncertainty.

Testing Your Proofs.—The intrinsic soundness of your reasoning, the logical strength of this proof or that, is not the sole test of your argument. It must impress the audience to whom it is delivered. Hence it must be presented in terms and images that will recommend the reasoning to their minds. Cicero's advice on this point has special point for the advocate at the bar, but the principle is clearly applicable to other forms of pleading. In the second book of his *De Oratore*, Cicero said that he always conversed at length with every client who came to consult him; that he took care there should be no witness to their conversation, in order that his client might explain himself more freely; that he was accustomed to state every objection and to plead the cause of the opposing party with him, that he might arrive at the whole truth and be prepared on every point of the case; and that, after the client had left, he used to review all the facts himself under three different characters, his own, that of the judge, and that of the advocate on the other side. To neglect this labor, he said, was dishonesty and breach of trust.

Making Vigilant Adjustment—No Misunderstanding.—

What is professional counsel for some is often good advice for all. Your cause has enemies, your proposition will be opposed, the people will judge. Proceed with care.

What you say to your hearers will not be the words of your brief. The architect sends his plans to the builder, but for his client he makes a drawing, a picture of the house as it will look when finished. What you present to your hearers must satisfy them. Your greatest danger lies in the possibility that the audience will misunderstand your points. You must be so clear

in your treatment that they cannot misunderstand. Each individual point must be clear enough to be accepted at once; the whole must be so arranged that no element of the force achieved in the parts is lost to the effect of the whole.

Employing the Concrete and the Colorful.—The unit in any speech is an assertion, a statement, which you support or substantiate. You must say everything that is necessary. Repetition may be necessary, for you want your hearers to think with you, and you have to make it easy for them. The average man is not skilled as a listener; he wants to understand without trouble. His mind does not grasp abstractions, generalities, or bare facts. He finds no challenge in cryptic statement. You have to relate the fact in its setting of human incident, to present the truth in the concrete; your instances have to be narratives, not citations. Men who have mastered the art of communication with the public, with the average man, never violate this principle. When the first contentions for the literacy test became current in the discussions of the immigration problem, the average man read articles and listened to speeches, but he remembered with a chuckle T. A. Daly's point, in the delightful syllables of his famous

"Joe Gessapalina Can't Write His Own Name.
But he can do othra things justa da same."

Governor Smith in discussing aspects of New York's government did not say merely, that it was false economy in the affairs of a state to reduce the amount spent without regard to the value of the things sacrificed by the reduction. He dramatized the thought.

Sometimes I hear a lot of talk about economy in government, which usually means cutting down the amount spent. . . . Well, you can do the same thing in running a family. Put everybody on two meals a day, take away the girls' new dresses, and cut off the coal man in the fall. That will reduce expenses. But can anybody be happy in the house? That is another question. Now we are looking at the matter on the basis of the value received. Most of those who talk about economy in

government—particularly our New York Government—never seem to think of anything but the sum spent, regardless of the benefit.

Well, I am willing to leave the matter with the family. If we try to get along without our coal after October nobody will hear me complain. I never liked a house too hot anyway. And I can wear last year's suit as long as the next man. But if we are going to get all the happiness we can, I am in favor of paying the coal man's bill even if he gouges me. New York comes nearer to getting full value for its money than any other big family I ever knew. If anyone has an idea that it is easy to sell the State something for a high price, let him knock at the first department door he reaches and try to make the sale.

I suppose that governments everywhere—village, state, and national—are conducted today on the family principle. It is certainly true of New York. Why, we give the average man's affairs more thought than he gives them himself. Suppose he lives in the country—a State road runs by his door, bringing him everything he needs. His car can reach a State school in ten or fifteen minutes, a half hour at the most. Along the way he will receive State protection for his safety. If an accident happens to him or his family there are numerous State institutions to care for him. On Sunday he can travel a few miles to enjoy himself in one of the State parks. And all the time he will be benefited by an orderly, regulated government that helps to make it possible for him to prosper. . . .

I wish that the average man—the man we hear so much about and never seem to meet—would take a little more interest in his government. . . .

Judicious but Vivid Language.—Detailed exposition is a tax on interest. The intense earnestness of the speaker must balance the limitations of time and attention. If you recall an incident, it must have the dramatic quality that will give it vivid life in the minds of your hearers. If you make a comparison—the likeness or contrast of the things you hold up must have an essential force. When you resort to pure reasoning, your words must be severely simple and plain. In no case must your language, your instrument, invite attention to itself.

In Lincoln's Cooper Institute speech, observe the force of his reasoning and the plainness of his language in paragraphs such as this:

You say we are sectional. We deny it. That makes an issue; and the burden of proof is on you. You produce your proof; and what is it? Why, that our party has no existence in your section—gets no votes in your section. The fact is substantially true; but does it prove the issue? If it does, then in case we should, without change of principle, begin to get votes in your section, we should thereby cease to be sectional. You cannot escape this conclusion; and yet are you willing to abide by it? If you are, you will probably soon find that we have ceased to be sectional, for we shall get votes in your section this very year. You will then begin to discover, as the truth plainly is, that your proof does not touch this issue. The fact that we get no votes in your section is of your making, and not of ours. And if there be fault in that fact, that fault is primarily yours, and remains so until you show that we repel you by some wrong principle or practice. If we do repel you by any wrong principle or practice, the fault is ours; but this brings you to where you ought to have started—to a discussion of the right or wrong of our principle.

The Human Element—Force of Suggestion.—But you cannot rely upon mechanical perfection of argument. In the plea the speaker's object is action. There is something to be done, a step to be taken, perhaps a habit to be instilled. You cannot be content with a purely logical presentation. Causes are not won by the convincing of thinking machines, but through the persuasion of men and women. At every turn your proposition must therefore offer more than argument. In formulation, in arrangement, in analysis, in adequacy of evidence, your listener ought to discover compelling suggestions which tend to make them act as you desire.

Knowledge of human nature will indicate the motives to which you may appeal in seeking to establish in your hearers an attitude of mind that will lead, immediately or eventually, to the action sought. Knowledge of the subject and grasp of the situation, the beliefs and sympathies of the audience, your own position in their eyes, will enable you to choose and employ the suggestions that have the greatest force. Command of language will enable you to present with clearness the logical points you have assembled and to add the subtle elements of persuasion by

clothing with impressive words the suggestions you wish to employ.

Your procedure in persuasion will follow one of two main lines, which have been followed from the earliest times by those who have had to present a cause to their fellows.

The Merit of the Cause.—The first is that of building up in the mind of the listener a feeling of the merit of the cause itself, and of the benefit to himself which will result from his support of it. This benefit may take the form either of material profit or of a sense of satisfaction in duty done. This is essentially the method followed by “reason-why” advertising writing, and by most salesmanship.

The second method is more indirect but even more potent if well handled. It is that of rousing in the minds of the hearers a vivid realization of the deep interest which the speaker takes in the “cause” and a strong belief that the speaker is eminently competent as a guide, because of the validity of his thinking and his manifest sincerity. The result of this feeling on the part of the listeners is that a cause which can induce serious concern in such a man as the speaker is deserving of their own support.

When Governor Smith delivered the address at Philadelphia mentioned in Chapter XXIV, there had been little or no general interest in the passage of a bond issue to rehabilitate the hospitals of Pennsylvania. In fact there was quiet opposition to the movement. Few of the newspapers had come out in favor of this great charity. It has been said that the issue was a dead one, that the bonds would never have been voted except for this speech. The final words of the Governor’s plea were these:

The State has undertaken this obligation to care for these ill people. Just let us forget all about the money; let us forget everything that we have said tonight; let us forget the part that politics has played in it; forget who was responsible, and let us look at the problem from an entirely different, and to my mind, a very important viewpoint. Let us look at it from the viewpoint of individual responsibility. Because after all, a State in the last analysis is people; it is not great resources, great

farming centers, great agricultural plains, teeming cities and villages—it is people; and the responsibility is individual after the people's attention has been called to a condition.

With the possible exception of New York, I can think of no State in all this Union that owes as much to Almighty God as this State of Pennsylvania. Rich through gifts from Him in great natural resources that have been for centuries poured into the channels of trade throughout the world. Does it not occur to the individual that every now and then there is expected some offering in the nature of gratitude or in the nature of thanksgiving?

The gospel according to Saint Matthew in the 25th verse tells us that our Divine Lord was addressing the multitude on the Mount of Olives, overlooking the temple in the Holy City; and among other things he said to them: "When I was sick, you visited me; when I was naked, you clothed me; and when I was hungry, you fed me." And one of the multitude said to him, "Lord, when were you naked, when were you hungry, when were you sick?" And, pointing to the poor, the weak and the afflicted, whom we have been taught to believe he always had with him, he said to the multitude: "Inasmuch as you have done it for these, the poorest of my people, you have done it unto me."

Therefore do I say to the people of Pennsylvania that this is a great opportunity for the blessings that have flowed down from Heaven upon this great State. It is an opportunity for every man and every woman in Pennsylvania to be able to say to the ruler of the Universe Himself:

"Inasmuch as the poor, the weak, and the afflicted were special charges of Thy Divine Son during His life on earth, their care, their proper and adequate care, will be given by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania."

Following is the comment of one who heard the address:

To read this speech in cold type gives one no idea of the effect it had upon his audience. His listeners had started in by being skeptical if not contemptuous. Gradually he dispelled their suspicions and slowly gained their sympathy. Finally, just at the end, he laid before them this plea. At the last word, the audience sat for probably five seconds in absolute silence and then spontaneously rose and wave after wave of applause swept through the great hall. I have never seen the emotions of kindness and generosity and friendliness to a speaker so thoroughly aroused. Many of the women and certainly some of the men were in tears.

The Speaker's "Right to Speak."—Rousing in the listeners a feeling of the competence of the speaker as a guide is the special power of public speaking. It counts to some extent in the work of the salesman, but with the public speaker it is much stronger. In the first place, the man who is invited or permitted to stand up and address a crowd is presumed to be a person of dignity and substance. Moreover, whereas the salesman is presumed to be actuated chiefly or wholly by self-interest, with the man speaking in public upon a worthy cause the fair presumption is that self-interest is not his motive, that his zeal is unselfish. It is to be remembered, also, that a number of persons gathered together are far more open to suggestions as to the competence of the speaker as a guide than most of the same individuals would be in conversation. The range of the devices of strong suggestion at the disposal of the public speaker is greater. He can utilize the full resources of sense appeal—his voice and physical expression.

Consider what must have been the full effect of these words of Samuel Gompers in his speech at El Paso :

Events of recent months made me keenly aware that the time is not far distant when I must lay down my trust for others to carry forward. When one comes to close grips with the eternal things, there comes a new sense of relative values and the less worthy things lose their significance. As I review the events of my sixty years of contact with the labor movement and as I survey the problems of today and study the opportunities of the future, I want to say to you, men and women of the American labor movement, do not reject the cornerstone upon which labor's structure has been builded—but base your all upon voluntary principles and illumine your every problem by consecrated devotion to that highest of all purposes—human well being in the fullest, widest, deepest sense.

We have tried and proved these principles in economic, political, social and international relations. They have been tried and not found wanting. Where we have tried other ways, we have failed.

A very striking illustration is emphasized by circumstances connected with the present location of our convention. For years force and selfish interests dominated relations across this international border, but the labor movement brought to an acute and difficult situation the spirit

of patience and the desire of service and a transformation has been brought which gives us courage and conviction for wider application of the same principles. As we move upward to higher levels, a wider vision of service and responsibility will unfold itself. Let us keep the faith. There is no other way.

Steady Control of Self.—On the other hand, however important the cause in which you are engaged, and however passionately you are devoted to it, you must learn to control your enthusiasm. You do not want your zeal to defeat the end it seeks. That end does not depend in last analysis upon your own attitude, your feelings, but rather upon the change you and those associated with you may be able to make in the attitudes and feelings of other persons. Therefore the speaker cannot afford to pass the dead-line of sound sense. He must keep within the bounds of firm intellectual control. Whatever may be his purpose in touching the feelings of his audience, his own emotions must remain under steady control. This is the critical element in the plea for a cause. Here is where many a man, utterly devoted to a worthy cause, has failed in his zealous efforts to communicate his zeal to other people. To lose intellectual control is to sacrifice the delicate bond of sympathy and trust upon which the speaker rests the full force of his plea, the fate of his cause.

Of all those who, in recent years, have come before the American public in support of causes, Booker Washington has a place of his own. He had remarkable command of the mechanical technique of public presentation—a voice of unusual power and expressiveness, a dignified presence, and exceptional fluency and adequacy of language. His speeches were notable always for their simplicity of thought structure; he went straight to the point, avoiding all elaborate and intricate reasoning. His statements individually were marked by directness and homeliness of wording. There was no fancifulness, no mere prettiness of language. Booker Washington conveyed the impression always of absolute sincerity; not only freedom from deliberate dishonesty or posing, but freedom also from unconscious false motives and petty views.

He was completely absorbed in the cause to which his life had been given. At the same time he never passed the limits of sound sense; he was never carried away by his enthusiasm into extravagance or exaggeration. In studying the nature and the technique of the plea for a cause, you will do well to analyze carefully, for themselves and in reference to their background, the public addresses of the great negro.

CHAPTER XXVIII

PUBLIC FUNCTIONS

Representing the Community.—Gatherings of the people that have special significance, public occasions of note and official assemblages, require the best efforts of the speaker. Gatherings of this kind range from school and college commencements and local observances of anniversaries and the like, to the Inaugural Addresses of Presidents and their utterances on solemn occasions of national or international significance. The speaker, whether he be a public official performing one of the many duties of his office, or a private citizen, called upon to take part in the observance, is speaking as the representative of the community. His one object is that of promoting the ends of "justice and the common good."

It is probable that the position you occupy in your calling and in the community will sooner or later call for your services in some official capacity at gatherings of a public nature. It may be merely that you will be called upon to introduce a lecturer, to preside at a luncheon, to welcome a distinguished guest, and will have to say a few words to give grace to the occasion.

It is of the very nature of a courtesy that it shall not offend in any way. In conversation, when you introduce one acquaintance to another, you employ the conventional form. You do not seize upon both parties as an audience for yourself. You certainly do not monopolize the conversation. Very likely you withdraw for a time, simply performing the duty of host or hostess. That is what should be done in the case of the usual public gathering of a social nature. The community's invitation to a speaker assumes the existence of a desire for mutual acquaintance. The chairman gives the conventional introduction. That is enough.

It often happens, unfortunately, that in the exhilaration of the moment a chairman yields to the expansiveness of spirit that takes hold of him and makes a speech, although what is asked of him is merely a courtesy. When, as occasionally it comes to pass, a chairman forgets himself utterly, and seizes upon the time of an audience, assembled to listen to a distinguished guest, as an opportunity to display his own oratorical gifts, the offense is grave.

A Crime Against Courtesy.—One culprit, on a recent occasion in the prosperous suburban town of Blankville, suffered a “come-uppance” which those of his stamp all deserve, but few have meted out to them. It was a nine o’clock function. The audience, a distinguished gathering, was on time. The preliminary program, chiefly musical, was brief and good. The chairman was delighted with the audience and took some time to say so. Then came the time for the address of the evening. At ten o’clock the chairman arose, addressed another compliment to the audience, then launched forth into a eulogy of the speaker, and followed that with an extensive commentary on the subject and its possibilities. At ten minutes of eleven he reached his final peroration and proceeded to introduce the speaker of the evening in the usual manner.

Retribution.—The distress of the audience was almost distraction. Many had come by train and had to leave in the same way. The last train left at 11:15. The auditorium was five minutes from the station. Many wanted to leave but could not bring themselves to add to the discourtesy of the occasion. The chairman beamed. The guest arose. In graceful manner and tone he said that he had enjoyed the evening very much; that it was a pleasure to be with such a sympathetic audience; that it was a pleasure to listen to Mr. N. (though much of what he had said was not deserved); and (with affability) that it would be a pleasure to meet the men and women of Blank on another occasion! Gracefully but unmistakably it was done. The audience

left. At that moment the effect was not complete, but on the way home limousine and street-car, railway train and sidewalk, buzzed.

Brevity and Grace.—When it is your duty to introduce a speaker you will satisfy the courtesy as appropriately as you can. If it seems to be fitting, you will make a reference to the nature of the occasion and the significance of the presence of the speaker. But you will be brief. A single sentence will often do. A hundred words is ample measure. And you will not add a dozen words to the sum by reminding the audience that you would “like to say more but do not want to take up the speaker’s time.”

Next to making a speech of his own, the worst thing a chairman can do is to eulogize the speaker to his face. If he cannot pay a graceful and inoffensive compliment to the speaker by means of a brief phrase included in the conventional words of introduction, it is better to make no attempt.

An excellent model was set by Dean Shailer Mathews of the University of Chicago who, at a meeting of the Federal Council of Churches in Columbus, in December of 1915, announced rather than introduced President Wilson, as follows: “Ladies and Gentlemen: The President.”

There are, of course, occasions of a formal character in which the usual brief introduction might seem too inconsiderable. At such a time the chairman is certainly not at fault if he takes a minute or two to call attention to something in the history of the group, the organization, or something in the significance of the occasion, or of the speaker’s presence.

Presentation Remarks.—Similarly, it may become the duty of an individual to speak for a group in presenting to a guest some tangible evidence of esteem and honor. The elements of such an address of courtesy are perfectly clear—the reason for the award, and the presentation in the name of the group. All that the occasion demands of the speaker is the graceful expression of these simple elements. A bit of narrative may well serve the

one and a sentence or two will do for the other. The words of welcome are the speaker's sole purpose; they must not seem to be part of something else, an afterthought to a speech of his own.

To attempt to give instructions for making the words of this conventional form amusing, light and witty, or weighty and impressive, is futile. Such qualities are of the man. But any man of intelligence can say a word of welcome or of introduction and refrain from making a speech. He can do the right thing instead of the wrong thing. If he does the right thing very well, so much the better. If he does the wrong thing well, it is still wrong.

Official Courtesies.—When the President or Vice-president of the United States, or other officer of the federal government, welcomes a commission, or an ambassador from another nation, naturally the significance of the event will be properly emphasized and the utterance will have a weightier tone than that which would be appropriate in matters in which individual men are concerned. Where nations are involved, events are on a greater scale and the words of men strike deeper notes.

Yet even on such occasions the requirements of courtesy and diplomacy are served in comparatively few words. In the following few sentences Thomas R. Marshall, then Vice-president of the United States, performed the official courtesy at the reception of the Belgian Commission in the Senate of the United States, June 22, 1927:

Senators, since that far off, unrecorded hour when our ancestors began their slow westward movement, unnumbered and unremembered, thousands have died upon the field of battle, for love, for hate, for liberty, for conquest, as freemen, or as slaves. Every note in the gamut of human passion has been written in the anvil chorus of war. Many have struck the redeeming blow for their own country, but few have unsheathed their swords without the hope of self-aggrandizement. It remained for little Belgium to write in the blood of her martyred sons and daughters a new page in the annals of diplomacy, to inscribe thereon that the dishonor of a people is the aggregate of the selfishness of its citizens; that the honor of a people is the aggregate of the self-sacrifice

of its citizens; that treaties are made to be kept not broken; that a people may dare to walk through "the valley of the shadow of death" touching elbows with their convictions, but that they dare not climb to the mountaintops of safety if thereby they walk over the dead bodies of their high ideals; that a people may safely die if thereby they can compel an unwilling world to toss upon their new made graves the white lily of a blameless life.

Here, Senators, ends all I know, and here begins what I believe: Belgium shall arise. The long night of her weeping shall end; the morning of a day of joy shall break over her desolated homes, her devastated fields and her profaned altars. When it breaks, humanity will learn that when mankind gambles with truth and honor and humanity, the dice of the gods are always loaded.

To me, in all profane history there is no sadder, sweeter, sublimer character than Sidney Carton. Dreamer of dreams, he walked his lonely, only way. In all the history of nations there is no sadder, sweeter, sublimer story than the story of Belgium. Doer of deeds, she too has walked her lonely, only way—the *via dolorosa* that leads to duty, death and glory. Out of the depths, and across the deeps, the representatives of the remnant of her people and the guardians of her honor have come to us this day.

I present to you the chairman of that mission, Baron Moncheur.

Responses.—If you should chance to be the recipient of an honor or a distinction at a public gathering, while you may not, perhaps, wish to make a speech, it may be clear that you ought to respond. It will be only reasonable to make proper recognition of the honor accorded you. You will be guided entirely by the situation, limiting your words to the response just mentioned, or making use of the occasion for presenting thoughts concerning a cause with which in the eyes of the audience you are identified.

Should you be the representative of a group to whom honor is accorded or a gift is made, your response assumes the appropriate form of an utterance on the part of the group. Sentiments that an individual would express on such an occasion, you express in the name of the organization.

The obligations of public appearance are not always preceded by a timely invitation and an opportunity to prepare. The tide of fortune turns suddenly at times. Such occasions, however, do

not impose heavy burdens. The audience does not expect the type of speech that comes from careful preparation of a definite subject. What is expected is a graceful response. The speaker, conscious of his part in the affairs that have given rise to the public occasion, strikes a harmonious chord in the proceedings and sits down before the pleasing vibrations have ceased.

Simplicity.—There is no better modern example of simple and effective style in such responses than that of the hero of the lone flight to Paris. No one but will recall the unfailing appropriateness of the various responses of Colonel Lindbergh to the honors and receptions that were accorded him in Paris, in London, in Brussels, and later in Washington, New York, and throughout America.

In every utterance the young aviator showed a keen consciousness of his rôle as “messenger of the gods—.” He assumed that the public was interested not so much in him as in what his achievement represented. The “We” of pleasant echo, in his references to the flight, served to make this very clear. In more than one instance it was remarked that Colonel Lindbergh seemed rather to be a spectator in the ceremonies and public functions than the personality about which these were centered.

He never ceased to preserve the unity of his message. In correcting the implications of certain colorful but inept phrases in the effusions of the newsprints he was easy but unmistakable. At every turn his speeches were brief, frank and friendly, suited to the immediate purpose of the gathering, and in harmony with his own special mission in his chosen field,—of which the flight to Paris was a brilliant incident. Those who went to *see* him were glad to hear his words. The many who could not get to see him were thankful for the radio and the newspapers. Too often a man who has won standing in one field is tempted to give opinions and pronouncements in others, frequently with no great wisdom. It was not so with the man who flew across the ocean alone. The public demanded discussion of aviation. Colonel Lindbergh,

expert, complied. He did not put himself forward. He claimed no eminence. He made no sudden ventures in fields beyond his own.

Courtesies and Responses Not Speeches.—Words of introduction, welcome, presentation, and remarks by way of response to these courtesies do not constitute speeches. The duties of public office are frequently concerned with formalities of one kind or other which necessitate addresses of more formal character. Even at such times, however, brevity is a most excellent quality. When the statue of Rochambeau was to be unveiled, in 1902, the French took official notice of the occasion by sending to our shores the Battleship Gaulois. On May 23, President Roosevelt attended a luncheon given on the French ship and in two hundred and fifty words paid a tribute to the French nation.

Mr. Ambassador: We appreciate what France has done in sending to our shores on this occasion such a magnificent warship, and we appreciate the choice of those who were sent here; and Mr. Cambon, we thank you for your happy good judgment in selecting such an illustrious commander of the army and navy to send to us on the auspicious occasion of the unveiling of the Rochambeau statue. One hundred and twenty years ago the valor the soldiers and sailors of France exerted, according to the judgment of historians, the determining influence in making this country free and independent. Mr. Ambassador, I thank you personally for the courtesy which has been extended to me. It has been a source of valued information to be permitted to see and inspect this splendid French vessel, and I have been duly impressed by its superior mechanism and by the superior physique and discipline of your men. I am sure I speak for the American Navy when I say it has been a source of pleasure that such a splendid specimen of French naval architecture as the Gaulois has visited our shores on such a friendly mission, and in its name I thank you. Let me, on behalf of the people of the United States, and with certain conviction that I have expressed their sentiments, drink to the health of President Loubet and to the continued prosperity of the mighty nation of which he is President.

Almost as brief was the speech of the same President to a gathering of citizens in his honor, at Riverside, California, May 7, 1903. The very different elements involved in this courtesy

are obvious. The very simple nature of the function made it unnecessary for the Chief Executive to be impressive and formal. Here are the words:

Mr. Mayor, and you my fellow-citizens: I have enjoyed to the full getting into your beautiful state. I had read about what I should expect here in Southern California but I had formed no idea of the fertility of your soil, the beauty of your scenery, or the wonderful manner in which the full advantage of that soil had been taken by man. Here I am in the pioneer community of irrigated fruit growing in California. In many other parts of the country I have had to preach irrigation. Here you practice it, and all I have to say here is that I earnestly wish that I could have many another community learn from you how you have handled your business. Not only has it been most useful, but it is astonishing to see how with the use you have combined beauty. You have made of this city and its surroundings a veritable little paradise.

It has been delightful to see you. Today has been my first day in California. I need hardly say that I have enjoyed it to the full. I am glad to be welcomed by all of you, but most of all by the men of the Grand Army, and after them, by my own comrades of the National Guard, and I have been particularly pleased to pass between the rows of school children. I like your stock and I am glad it is not dying out.

I shall not try this evening to do more than say to you a word of thanks for your greeting to me. I admire your country, but I admire most of all the men and women of the country. It is a good thing to grow citrus fruits, but it is even a better thing to have the right kind of citizenship. I think you have been able to combine the very extraordinary material prosperity with that form of the higher life which must be built upon material prosperity if it is to amount to what it should in the long run.

I am glad to have seen you. I thank you for coming here to greet me. I wish you well at all times and in every way, and I bid you good luck and good-night.

Commencement Speeches.—Every year thousands of eminent citizens are called upon to address public gatherings at which the exercises of graduation from school or college take place. "Mere sentiment" does not explain the annual return of the "old boys" and the existence of Alumni Associations. When worthy ties bind men in common interests and common causes much good may come to the people and the state.

Graduation exercises constitute a special feature in American Life. They are the expressions of useful traditions and customs; events in the lives of the people. As such they are opportunities for special service on the part of those who have demonstrated a certain skill in the work they have chosen to do. The man who meets the obligation with his best effort helps to make pleasant, profitable and memorable a big event in a little world.

When you receive an invitation to address graduates, you will recognize in the call an important opportunity and a responsibility. The young graduates may be heartened and inspired by a bit of instruction or an expression of confidence from one who represents age and wisdom. But youth is honest and will bring to bear the remorseless logic of fresh minds upon the platitudes, pompous phrases, and trite borrowings of those who have mistaken the purpose and the circumstances of their speaking,—upon such stuff as the following, inflicted upon one college audience A. D. 1925.

It is with fear and trepidation that I approach the pleasant task allotted me . . . men eminent for their profound erudition . . . I am deeply sensible therefore of my inability to rise to the high standard set by my predecessors. . . .

This is indeed an auspicious day . . . nestled among the historic hills . . . lift eyes Heavenward . . . the acid test. . . . From time immemorial . . . threw wide her portals . . . the fair sex. . . .

Young ladies, we heartily welcome you within the *folds* of our Alumni.

. . . In that tremulous period of time . . . countless ages gone before.

. . . Gently part the curtains of time. . . . Time in his inexorable flight . . . we are constrained to go back. . . .

The human mind is staggered when we calmly contemplate the gigantic and herculean strides made since . . . the unpretentious birth of our Alma Mater.

. . . Came the great World War which shook the very foundation of the earth from center to circumference. . . . Through the intervention of American Arms victory was snatched from defeat . . . but alas, at what price?

"What is it, after all, the people get?

Why! taxes, widows, wooden legs and debts."

(one of eleven quotations, typical, distributed methodically in twelve pages of text.)

(There is more) . . . scattering broadcast the germs of knowledge . . . nature's storehouse of wonders . . . man, inquisitive man prodded Mother Nature so persistently that she was forced to partially reveal her secret concerning electricity, that subtle, invisible, indefinable force that today does our slightest bidding at the mere touch of a button . . . vast ocean of time. . . .

. . . Weary feet have reached the summit of life's mountain and you begin the downward path toward the setting sun, approach thine end. . . .

What Can the Commencement Speaker Say?—But young people give eager attention to the speaker who has something to communicate and who talks to them—in manly fashion—in plain English. A thought or two worth thinking, a respect for the audience, young though it be, and a decent brevity, are all they demand of commencement speakers.

And you can give much more than this. You can take the trouble to find out about the school or college, its traditions, its history, its special aims. You can learn something of the graduating class you are to address, its size, how many are going on to other institutions, how many worked their way through, into what jobs and callings they are going. If, provided with this knowledge and aware of what is going on in the local world, and the world beyond, you take the trouble to prepare in the usual manner, it is not likely that you will disappoint your youthful fellow-citizens.

The College President's Address.—As is natural, the best commencement addresses are apt to be those of the college president himself. He is not engaged in a casual performance. In the name of the college to which he is giving his professional life, in the name of those before him who have given their lives to the service of the institution he represents, and in the presence of the alumni who represent the tangible service of that institu-

tion to society and the state, he is formally and with appropriate ceremony sending on into the ranks of the professions, into industry and trade, the young citizens whose parents and friends have assembled to witness the exercises. The address of President William Lowe Bryan of Indiana University to the graduating class of 1906, is a notable illustration of such utterances:

I wish to preach a short sermon on the text "He knew what was in man."

In all that you have learned within or without the schools, there is nothing more important than what you know or believe you know about human nature. You have been told many conflicting things. You have been told that men are on the whole very good, that they are friendly, generous, trustworthy, and that the joy of life lies in friendship and in cooperation with your fellows. You have been told that where men do fall short of what they should be, they are teachable, that they can be reached and touched and changed and made right, and that the highest and happiest life work is in some way to make men better, and then to live and die compassed about by their gratitude.

On the other hand, you have heard an entirely different story. You have heard from many high sources that life is essentially tragic, that under all the shows of civilization and religion, life is war, as relentless as ever it was in the jungle, and that the hope of making society really better is forever an illusion. The honorable Brutus, it is said, the noblest Roman of them all, is never able to regenerate Rome. He comes at last to his Philippi, and is slain by the corrupt society which he has sought to save. The generous Timon, they say, who lavishes his wealth upon those about him, always finds himself forsaken in his adversity, and can only turn upon mankind with rage and curses. Prince Hamlet, we are told, finds always that the State of Denmark is rotten and can only cry, "How weary, flat, stale and unprofitable seem to me all the uses of the world." According to this tragic view of life, Moses, the nationmaker, who leads the people out of Egypt through the desert toward the Holy Land, is always stricken with despair, not by his enemies, but by the perversity and treachery of his own people, and is always forced to cry to God, as Moses did, for death as an escape from his intolerable burden.

Now in hearing and weighing these and other conflicting views as to what the truth is about human nature, it is surely worth while to hear and to weigh the view of Him of whom it was said, "He knew what was in man." What did He see in us?

For one thing He saw the evil. No man hater ever saw it blacker. He knew that there is in man lust and murder and treachery and a covering of hypocrisy. He knew no philosophy with which to take these things lightly. They were to Him infinitely more dreadful than the lash or the crown of thorns. The worst of them was disloyalty—the disloyalty of His friends. “He came unto his own and his own received him not.” He wept over Jerusalem and said “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered your children together even as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not.” He was betrayed by one of the Twelve for money. On the last night they all forsook Him and fled. And one of them, that night, three times denied that he knew his Master.

If ever a man was justified in turning with tragic hopelessness away from the human race, it was Jesus of Nazareth.

Why did He not give us up? The answer is, “Because he knew what was in man.” Because underneath the man of lust and murder and treachery, He saw another man who can not be given up. He knew the passion of the Prodigal, the passion which led him from his father’s house into every iniquity; but He also knew that in the Prodigal there was a deeper passion which, if awakened, would lead him from among the swine back to the life where he belonged. He knew the disloyal cowardice of Peter, but He knew that below the cowardice and disloyalty there was a Peter who would stand like a rock in a storm. He looked out from his Cross upon a jeering multitude, symbol of the vaster multitude who forever jeer and crucify the good, and there He performed His supreme miracle. He believed in them. He saw what was in them. He saw through the darkness and through the whirlwind of evil passion the real multitude, whose deepest law, whose deepest necessity, is that they shall be loyal to each other and to their Father in Heaven.

My children, believe this man. Life is tragic, as He saw. Life is terrible, as you will know. You may fight as the tigers do until your turn comes to perish. You may curse with Timon. You may despair with Hamlet. Or, with Jesus of Nazareth, you may find a place within, where there are neither curses nor despair nor war, but where there lives an unconquerable courage for every circumstance and for every task which can come to you before the going down of the sun.

Public Observances.—National holidays, dedications of public monuments, and similar occasions of ceremony, call for

observances of formal character. Well planned and well managed programs for such occasions often include several courtesies or formalities, to be performed by the officials concerned, but rarely is there more than one principal speaker. The words of welcome by official dignitaries, the remarks of the chairman, the expressions of good-will by representatives of this group or that, all fill incidental parts and help to provide the setting for the speaker of the day.

For over a hundred years we have been giving public observance to anniversaries of events in our history. On December 22, 1820, an earlier generation of American citizens met to celebrate for the first time the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth Rock. To this gathering, two hundred years after the event, Daniel Webster delivered his discourse upon "The First Settlement of New England," regarded by contemporaries as "the most eloquent address ever uttered on this continent." It is to be found in Webster's "Works." In the third paragraph of that oration which you can read at your leisure, Webster says:

It is a noble faculty of our nature which enables us to connect our thoughts, our sympathies, and our happiness with what is distant in place or time; and, looking before and after, to hold communion at once with our ancestors and our posterity. Human and mortal although we are, we are nevertheless not mere isolated beings, without relation to the past or the future.

Neither the point of time nor the spot of earth, in which we physically live, bounds our rational and intellectual enjoyments. We live in the past by a knowledge of its history; and in the future by hope and anticipation. By ascending to an association with our ancestors; by contemplating their example and studying their character; by partaking of their sentiments, and imbibing their spirit; by accompanying them in their toils, by sympathizing in their sufferings, and rejoicing in their successes and their triumphs; we mingle our own existence with theirs and seem to belong to their age. . . .

A little further on the great American suggested the scope of his discourse:

Standing in this relation to our ancestors and our posterity, we are assembled on this memorable spot to perform the duties which that rela-

tion and the present occasion imposes upon us. We have come to this Rock to record here our homage for our Pilgrim Fathers; our sympathy in their sufferings; our gratitude for their labors; our admiration of their virtues; our veneration for their piety; and our attachment to those principles of civil and religious liberty which they encountered the dangers of the ocean, the storms of heaven, the violence of savages, disease, exile and famine, to enjoy and establish. And we would leave here, also, for the generations which are rising up rapidly to fill our places, some proof that we have endeavored to transmit the great inheritance unimpaired; that in our estimate of public principles and private virtue, in our veneration of liberty and piety, in our devotion to civil and religious liberty, in our regard for whatever advances human knowledge or improves human happiness, we are not altogether unworthy of our origin.

The plan as set forth calls for a longer discourse than our best practice sanctions today. Times and conditions have changed in that respect. But the problem of the speaker has not changed. Essentially the paragraph quoted gives a plan that might be used for any anniversary of national significance. The need for this kind of "adult education" is just as great as ever it was. Today, moreover, it has at its disposal the limitless audience of the radio.

Modern Occasions—Birthdays.—The spirit of the nation is annually evoked in the names of her great men. The birthdays of Washington and Lincoln are the most obvious examples. But all over the land other birthdays are observed. The lights of other great lives are held up to men. The aim is not so much to relate the incidents of a career—that is incidental, and for lives already well known it is superfluous—but rather to exhibit qualities of heart and mind that make worthy subjects of thought for the people.

The call to deliver a speech of this kind challenges the best that is in you. In the process of getting ready to speak you will keep in mind that your development of the subject must be consistent at every point with truth. You cannot give praise where it is not due and maintain that consistency. Your aim is to

exhibit honor, virtue, courage, not to prate about them. You desire to arouse admiration, but you will hold soberly to fact, for exaggeration will defeat the very purpose of your speaking. Your good judgment will be exercised in selecting the incidents that will best serve your purpose, and your full skill in presenting adequately their significance.

Public Anniversaries.—Solemn occasions in the lives of nations have called forth some of the gravest and most beautiful of human utterances. From the time of the Greek Pericles, whose address "On Those Who Died in the War" has come down to us from four hundred years before the Christian era, the struggles and triumphs of men have been recorded and interpreted in noble words. The words of Demosthenes in his Oration on the Crown, phrase a plea for public virtue:

It cannot be, no, my countrymen, it cannot be that you have acted wrong in encountering danger bravely for the liberty and safety of all Greece! No, by those generous souls of ancient times who were exposed at Marathon; by those who stood arrayed at Plataea; by those who encountered the Persian fleet at Salamis; by those who fought at Artemisium; by all those illustrious sons of Athens whose remains lie deposited in the public monuments!—all of whom received the same honorable interment from their country; not those only who prevailed, not those only who were victorious; and with reason. What was the part of gallant men they all performed; their success was such as the Supreme Arbiter of the world dispensed to each.

But lofty expressions are not the exclusive boast of ancient days. It was the spirit of little Belgium that flamed on the lips of her beloved arch priest, the man of peace against whose moral force and words of pure courage the arms and intrigue of the invader could not for all their might prevail. His pastorals, his letters, his addresses are all in print.¹ In the address delivered at St. Gudule, Brussels, on the day of the National Fete, July 21, 1916, "For Our Soldiers," there is the majesty of Demosthenes. Almost any portion of it will serve to show its nature:

¹ Cardinal Mercier: *Pastorals, Letters, and Allocutions 1914-1917*. Kenedy & Sons, 1917.

What lessons of moral greatness there are to be learned here around us, and in exile, and in the prisons, and in the concentration camps in Holland and in Germany!

Do we think enough of what those brave men must be suffering, who since the beginning of the war, on the morrow of the defense of Liège and Namur, and the retreat from Antwerp, saw their military career shattered, and chafe and fret, these guardians of our rights, and of our communal liberties, whose valor has reduced them to inaction?

It needs courage to throw one's self forward, but it needs no less to hold one's self back. Sometimes it is more noble to suffer in silence than to act.

And what of these two years of calm submission by the Belgian people before the inevitable; this unshakable tenacity, which moved a humble woman, before whom the possibilities of an approaching conclusion of peace were being discussed, to say: "Oh, as for us, we must not worry; we can go on waiting." How beautiful is all this, and how full of instruction for the generations to come!

This is what you must look at, my brothers, the greatness of the nation in her sacrifice; our universal and enduring brotherhood in anguish and in mourning, and in the same unconquerable hope; this is what you must look at to appraise your Belgian fatherland at its true value.

Now the first exponents of this moral greatness are our soldiers.

Until that day when they return to us, and when grateful Belgium acclaims the living, and places a halo of glory about the memory of her dead, let us build up for them in our hearts a permanent monument of sacred gratitude.

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And, just as our heroes at the front show us a wonderful and consoling spectacle of indissoluble unity, of a brotherhood in arms, which nothing can destroy, even so, in our ranks, less compact and well disciplined though they may be, we shall earnestly strive to maintain the same patriotic sense of union. We will respect the truce imposed on our quarrels by the one great Cause which alone ought to use and absorb all our powers of attack and combat; and if there are any godless or unfortunate people who fail to understand the urgency and the beauty of this national precept, and insist, in spite of all, on keeping alive and fomenting the passions which divide us when other matters are concerned, we will turn aside our heads, and continue, without answering them, to remain faithful to the pact of fellowship, of friendship, of loyal and true confidence which we have concluded with them, even in spite of themselves, under the great inspiration of the war.

The approaching date of the first centenary of our independence ought to find us stronger, more intrepid, more united than ever. Let us prepare ourselves for it with work, with patience and in true brotherhood.

When in 1930, we recall the dark years of 1915-16, they will appear to us as the brightest, the most majestic, and if, from today, we resolve that they shall be so, the happiest and most fruitful in our national history. *Per crucem ad lucem*—from the sacrifice flashes forth the light!

Even closer to ourselves are the words of Woodrow Wilson, addressed to the joint session of the two Houses of Congress, April 2, 1917, ending with the famous period so frequently quoted:

It is a distressing and oppressive duty, Gentlemen of the Congress, which I have performed in thus addressing you. There are, it may be, many months of fiery trial and sacrifice ahead of us. It is a fearful thing to lead this great peaceful people into war, into the most terrible and disastrous of all wars, civilization itself seeming to be in the balance. But the right is more precious than peace, and we shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts,—for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own governments, for the rights and liberties of small nations, for a universal dominion of right by such a concert of free peoples as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world itself at last free. To such a task we can dedicate our lives and our fortunes, everything that we are, and everything that we have, with the pride of those who know that the day has come when America is privileged to spend her blood and her might for the principles that gave her birth and happiness and the peace which she has treasured. God helping her, she can do no other.

As an introduction to the noblest of all utterances for a public occasion, let us recall here some earlier words of Woodrow Wilson, in Chicago, February 12, 1909, at the celebration of the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln:

Lincoln was of the mass, but he was so lifted and big that all men could look upon him, until he became the "model for the mass" and was "singly of more value than they all. . . ."

A great nation is not led by a man who simply repeats the talk of the street-corners or the opinions of the newspapers. A nation is led

by a man who hears more than these things; or who, rather, hearing those things understands them better, unites them, puts them into a common meaning; speaks, not the rumors of the street, but a new principle for a new age; a man in whose ears the voice of the nation does not sound like the accidental and discordant notes than come from the voice of a mob, but concurrent and concordant like the united voices of a chorus, whose many meanings, spoken by melodious tongues, unite in his understanding in a single meaning and reveal to him a single vision, so that he can speak what no man else knows, the common meaning of the common voice. Such is the man who leads a great, free, democratic nation.

On November 19, 1863, the land given by the State of Pennsylvania to the federal government for use as a national cemetery in which to bury the fifty thousand men who fell at Gettysburg, was dedicated. President Lincoln, in uttering the words of dedication which he had written in pencil on an envelope in the train that carried him to Gettysburg, gave supreme interpretation to the spirit of the gathering and of his country:

Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

CHAPTER XXIX

IN LIGHTER VEIN

Social Occasions.—In the public addresses thus far considered success is measured by the serious contribution you make to the thought or the purpose of the audience. Many of those which you have to deliver are information addresses; sometimes you present a plea for a cause; often you have to take part in a public function of more or less formal character. Fully as often, however, you may be invited to address a general audience when the occasion is not serious, when your success is measured by your contribution to the good feeling or entertainment of the audience. What are you to do then?

The chief occasion of the sort is the dinner speech, which has become one of the institutions of English-speaking peoples. The custom derives from the old-time practice of "drinking healths," which with people of English stock goes back to very early days. When a company assembled at dinner was large, it was natural that the proposal of a particular "health," such as "the King," "the Regiment," "the Ladies," should be accompanied by a little speech. Someone was designated to act as chairman or "toast-master," and often, following parliamentary practice, the proposal would be seconded in another speech.

For generations this formal organization of the dinner company for the purpose of expressing their sentiments and drinking the health of favored persons and causes has been followed at dinner gatherings of every sort; whether of governmental, military, professional, social, or business nature. As already noted, the same practice was long observed also in English public-houses, the "poor man's clubs." As American social customs followed those of England, here, too, the custom of the formal dinner

organization became universal. Since the coming of prohibition the drinking of healths has disappeared, but we still have the dinners, and the speeches.

Few Escape Public Dinners.—The number of such occasions today is astounding. With hardly an exception the thousands of voluntary groups discussed in Part III, whether their primary aim is personal pleasure and study, or business progress, or social work, and thousands of business houses besides, have each their occasional social gatherings when members and friends meet round the table for a good dinner and friendly talk. In many a big city hotel three or four dinners, each with its twenty-five, hundred, or thousand guests, are held every night of the week. The hours exacted of a man in active life for attendance at such occasions mount up heavily in the course of a year. The personnel manager of a large organization, when an old friend tried to arrange a meeting of their families, found that he was engaged for official or semi-official dinners three weeks ahead, five nights a week. At eight of these he had to make a speech; at six of them he had to preside.

In colleges and schools, and in Y. M. C. A.'s and other adult courses as well, instruction in after-dinner speaking is frequently a regular part of the curriculum. At a certain college some years ago the class in after-dinner speaking came, by the irony of fate, at 11 o'clock in the morning. As those were the days of 8 o'clock required chapel at the top of a steep hill, which meant that many of the husky boys in class got no breakfast, the after-dinner speeches just before the one big meal of the day laid a heavy tax on tempers and stomachs.

Yet the cases are far more numerous of a different sort of wretchedness, that of the man who has to make a dinner speech and is so nervous that he can eat nothing himself while waiting. For many of these gatherings, unfortunately, are dreary for all concerned. The speeches are often perfunctory, a patch-work of ancient stories strung along without rhyme or reason, or dull

rambling chatter, mere soliloquizing. The attitude of the listeners is often one of bored endurance. Now and then in revolt against the tiresome practice, the invitations for the dinner bear the inscription: "There will be no speeches!" Many organizations indeed are resorting, like the ancient Romans at their feast, or the crowds at medieval banquet halls, to paid singers and entertainers. One of the nation-wide service clubs, although a feature of its weekly local meetings is the informal speechifying by members, recently turned to a highly paid professional monologist for entertainment at the sessions of its national convention. The dreariness of many dinners finds embodiment in a quip by Will Rogers, during Colonel Lindbergh's "swing round the circle" in the fall of 1927: "I saw Lindbergh the other day. That banquet chicken is slowly getting him!"

Attitude of Audience Sometimes to Blame.—Now the reason for the ill-success of many such gatherings is perhaps to be found in imperfect realization by audience and speakers alike, of the nature of the occasion, and inadequate command of the communication technique for which it calls.

The idea of a dinner is not that of a vaudeville program with a few persons doing stunts before a passive audience, but that of a company of acquaintances gathering in friendly mood to give one another a good time. It is in truth a kind of public occasion, the mood of which is not one of stern commitment to a cause or yet of serious contemplation of truth, but merely of comfort and good-fellowship. If those in charge can realize the significance of the occasion in the life of the group, and do their own part tactfully, almost any dinner can be made a success.

The Problem of "Preparation."—On the part of the speakers the difficulty is, usually, that they do not fully understand the essential conditions of such an affair; the nature of the technique required. Very often when a man is invited to speak at a dinner, he does not know at all what is desired. When called upon un-

expectedly in the middle of an impromptu party when all the company are warmed with the enthusiasm of the moment, he has little trouble in talking; he just says what comes into his head in response to what has been said and done up to that point. But when he is invited to make a speech a fortnight hence, particularly to a company of strangers, the situation is different.

He is likely to feel that he ought to prepare but he does not know what the preparation involves. Such speech making as he has done before has been serious—"handling a topic," "giving information," "pleading a cause." Visualizing the evening as a time of informality and relaxation, spontaneous and care-free, he is likely to suppose that what is now expected is entertainment, and his effort to prepare is apt to resolve itself into memorizing such "funny stories" as he can lay hands on, although he is not at all in the habit of telling such stories. The result of such a labored attempt to be "funny" is almost certain to be disastrous. A man who is known for serious work, stumbling through a string of cold-storage anecdotes, is a futile and pathetic spectacle.

On the other hand he may get the idea that he ought to make no preparation at all. He may assume that since the occasion is to be one of informal good humor his remarks also should be informal; that a speech with definite theme or definite structure is out of place; that what is wanted is for the speaker to get up and talk. As a result, when he does get up, his remarks are without form and void, as they are bound to be when no thought has been given to getting ready.

Serious Thought.—In truth, the fact that the occasion is informal does not mean at all that the remarks of a speaker may be incoherent or empty. The first essential of a dinner speech, as of any public address, is that it should have a central theme or purpose—even though the purpose or message is merely an expression of good-will from those he represents, or perhaps a personal report of his own feelings. It has to be presented in a form that is intelligible to other people, and that necessitates—in the

case of all but the expert few who get ready in a few minutes because they are always ready—a serious preparation. However light the speech itself may be, you cannot do without a little serious thinking about the manner of its formulation. When a man neglects this civility, when he permits himself to get up and just “talk along” for ten or fifteen minutes, the listeners feel, whether or not they ever put their feeling into words, that he is not playing fair.

An article in the *New Monthly Magazine*, an English periodical of some seventy-five years ago, gives a specimen of the formless talk sometimes inflicted upon dinner audiences in the days of our great grandfathers on both sides of the ocean :

This I may say, gentlemen—that is, perhaps, I may be allowed to observe—to remark, rather as remarkably expressive of—to observe, I would say, as remarkably expressive of my feelings on this occasion the present occasion—is, gentlemen,—that I consider this—I’m sure I need not say—and I say it without hesitation—that this is the proudest moment of my life, (pause). For, as the fabled bird of poetry, the phoenix, of our immortal bard, derives new vitality from the ashes of, if I may be allowed the expression, an expired and extinct existence, so does the calm serenity of age emanate from the transitory turbulence of youth, (pause). And, gentlemen—gentlemen, I’m quite sure I need not add—need not add—on the present occasion,—what I’m sure you will readily believe, that my feelings are naturally on the present occasion—that those feelings, I say, may be conceived, or even imagined, but they can neither be described, nor,—nor—depicted, (pause). For, like the poisonous upas, whose deadly and devastating—etc., etc.

Some of the phrases in this passage—*fabled bird, phoenix, immortal bard, poisonous upas*—have gone out of fashion today, but the manner of pompous aimlessness is unfortunately still with us.

Sincerity—Courtesy.—The first essential for success with a dinner speech is to be natural and sincere. That is an essential on all occasions when a man rises to address others but it is particularly necessary in a dinner speech when you are presumed

to be "among friends." Sincerity implies, in the first place, avoidance of posing or pretense. While portions of your talk may be playful or whimsical, the talk as a whole should be straightforward. You will be very careful, for instance, how you make light of your own performance, or pretend that it is perfunctory, or a stunt. To pose as lazy or incompetent is ill-advised. Such expressions as: "My subject was of course given me to depart from," or "I have talked my ten minutes and said nothing and now I can sit down," are clumsy fooling, likely to be misunderstood, and far from courteous to those who have invited you to address them.

A few years ago at a meeting of English and American scholars in England, one of the speakers at the luncheon was George Bernard Shaw. Some of the American guests, knowing Mr. Shaw merely from his writings, were perhaps a little dubious as to how the brilliant satirist would conduct himself on such an occasion. They had forgotten that Mr. Shaw was first of all a cultivated gentleman. His remarks were simple and straightforward—a friend talking frankly to other friends on a subject of mutual interest.

Genuine Thoughtfulness.—Sincerity implies, secondly, that you speak in character, that you express your real thought, whatever the subject you treat, and however light or merry the form of your remarks. The company wishes to learn what you think about this point or that, to catch a glimpse of your real self. Your remarks are expected to be more personal in coloring than in other types of speeches. To lift the curtain for a moment in this way is to do for your dinner audience something of what you do for your friends in conversation—those who are admitted beyond the conventionalities of casual acquaintance. Augustine Birrell, the English writer and statesman, relates that at one of the dinners of the Johnson Club, which assembles yearly in London to honor the memory of the sturdy old lexicographer, a prominent cricket-player from Aus-

tralia—who had come to the dinner with a friend—was called upon for some remarks. He told the club that until that evening he had never heard of Doctor Johnson.

Says Birrell: "Thereupon somebody was thoughtless enough to titter audibly. 'Yes,' added Bonnor in heightened tones, and drawing himself proudly up, 'and what is more, I come from a great country, where you might ride a horse sixty miles a day for three months, and never meet anybody who had. But,' he proceeded, 'I have heard of him now, and can only say that were I not Bonnor the cricketer, I would be Samuel Johnson.' He sat down amidst applause, and the sorrowful conviction straightway seized hold of me that could the Doctor have obtained permission to revisit Fleet Street, his earthly heaven, that night, and had he come in amongst us, he would certainly have preferred both the compliment and the conversation of the cricketer to those of the critics he would have found at the table."

Whatever the occasion may be, it is both desirable and possible to say something to show your hearers that you have given a little thought to the significance of the gathering. The success of Will Rogers in his dinner addresses arises in no slight degree from the care with which he investigates beforehand the nature and spirit of the assembly. However playful your remarks may be, it is always possible to find something that bears on the occasion, if you will give a little thought to the matter.

Trimness of Form.—The other requirement of the dinner speech is trimness of form. Whatever line of thought you follow, your remarks should have a text or theme, and a recognizable structure. Naturally, of course, the matters discussed in a dinner speech are generally of limited range and minor intensity. Such simple material requires skill in cooking and serving. Further, the listeners are in the mood to appreciate trimness and grace of arrangement and presentation. Their taste and judgment are active; their emotions are not deeply stirred. They are better able to appreciate points of form than when deeply engrossed in the

information which a speaker is presenting or in the plea which he is making. And they have more time.

Good form, of course, means not ornament so much as structure. Most good dinner speeches are simple in language and in detail texture. If flashes of wit suggest themselves, so much the better, but there should be no effort to labor them. What pleases the listeners is the working out of a little pattern of thought, by easy and apparently careless steps, which locks or clinches at the end, like a good short story in a magazine. Here, truly, is a special opportunity for art alike in the formulation and the delivery of your thought. Every bit of skill in language, and in the arts of delivery developed in the round of professional and social life, comes into play at such a time, and contributes its part in giving the precision of form and the lightness of touch which the informality of the occasion demands. A man of taste can make a dinner speech, whatever the subject, or occasion, a thing of interest and delight.

You may get some light upon the question of what to talk about by considering what is the reason for your invitation to speak.

Speaking to Your Own Group, Officially.—First of all, if the dinner is given by your own group or association, you may have to make a speech as part of your duties as an officer. The situation is, of course, different from that of the ordinary club meeting discussed in Part III, and your relationship to your fellow-members is different. The problem of what to say, however, is comparatively simple. It may be that a few words of greeting or appreciation, on the order of those noted in the preceding chapter, will be all that is required. The point to bear in mind is that your remarks should have trimness of form, heartiness of statement, and dignity and grace of delivery. There is no excuse for perfunctoriness in the mood, or sloppiness in the form.

Or you may take the opportunity to give an intimate little

discussion of some topic of group interest. The piquant combination of intimate acquaintance of speaker and listeners with the slightly formal mood of the occasion sometimes gives such addresses a special charm. Trimness of form and grace of style are essential. While the little speech should never be memorized, the thought should be prepared carefully beforehand, so that you may be able to give full attention to the finish of language and delivery.

Speaking to an Outside Group, as a Representative.—You may have been asked to speak to a company of strangers either as the representative of a group, or because of your personal prominence or distinction. If you are speaking as the representative of a group, your text will be found naturally in some phase of the relation between your group and the assembled company. Here again all that is required may be merely a brief and courteous message, light in substance and graceful in wording and delivery. On the other hand, it may be in place for you to enter upon a discussion of some topic of interest to both groups. Promising leads may usually be found in features of the time or place of meeting, the menu, the other speakers, and the history of the two groups.

The general manager of a certain fair-sized business is called on every year for a speech at the dinner of the Employees' Benefit Association. He is neither an orator nor a humorist. From the point of view of technique, his speeches are poor. He is merely a plain man who has given all his powers for some twenty years to carrying along that business—incidentally seeing that a square deal is given and received by everyone concerned, so far as it is humanly possible. He just tells his hearers in plain words, with hardly a shade of emotional coloring, the plain facts of the business, yet his bare and fragmentary statements, viewed against the background of his work and his personality, grip his hearers year by year.

At a recent dinner of the Chicago alumni of a small but

distinguished New England college, the hit of the evening was made by a guest, representing the alumni of its perennial rival. The dinner was an enthusiastic celebration of the winning of the season's football championship, and when the man from the other college was called on, the cheers with which he was greeted had a good-natured but slightly ironical ring. He rose to the occasion with hearty praise for the season's record, followed by still warmer praise for the exemplary patience shown by his hosts during the many, many years in which their colors had been trailed in the dust by the boys from his own institution.

When Invited Because of Personal Prominence.—The chances are that you have been invited to speak because of your personal prominence in some line of endeavor, or your identification with some well-known organization or cause. In this case you can probably do nothing so interesting for your hearers as to talk to them for a while informally about your special subject. It is a distinct opportunity to let your dinner acquaintances learn something of the matter which commands your own interest and adherence. Far from feeling it an intrusion, the guests will welcome your discussion if you will merely step down the information to the mood of the occasion. They are not able to follow, nor do they desire, a technical address. But you can give them something distinctly better, an address which non-technical listeners in a mood of friendly attentiveness can grasp. Many of the most interesting of dinner addresses are of this nature.

Talk of What Is Close to Your Heart.—The head of the Department of Archeology of a great university was called on to speak at a dinner of alumni of the little western college where his undergraduate work had been taken. He got up and told his old friends, in language that was beautifully simple and clear, about the plans for excavating one of the buried cities of antiquity, to which American archeologists for some years had been bending their attention. The theme was highly technical but his informal account was as fascinating as a story. Those men

and women from professional and business life were given a glimpse for the first time of a world of which they had not dreamed. It was a treat that many of them will never forget. The skill and vigor which enable you to discuss in serious mood a subject which interests you deeply, will enable you to make the same topic keenly interesting in a dinner speech, if you will observe the requirements of well-bred conversation.

Worthwhile Thought in Easy Form.—A company of friends gathered to celebrate a college reunion, or the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers, or the completion of the year's activities of a community group, a church, a great business organization or professional society, does not really prefer to wallow in buffoonery or to listen to idle chatter. The guests do not check their brains at the door with their hats. On such an occasion a company is ready to consider briefly any topic which is treated by a speaker with moderation and lightness. In the most entertaining conversation, as a rule, there are many smiles but little boisterous laughter; in the same way there are highly enjoyable public dinners where not a single "funny story" is told. Sprightliness and wit are gifts which not everyone can command at his will, but taste, control, the light touch which comes from friendly consideration of the limitations and the desires of the people before him, are within the reach of anyone who really tries for them.

Obviously, you will not make a dinner speech the occasion of propaganda or controversy. But the non-controversial aspects of your subject or cause will have much that is of interest. A missionary on furlough from China, some years ago, talked at the dinner of a community improvement association in a New York suburb. In the company were men and women of widely differing views as to missions, the policy of western nations in China, and kindred topics. The missionary took up nothing of all this. He merely drew for those Americans a picture of the daily life of a Chinese town, as he had grown to know it during

twenty years' residence. It was a glimpse into the unknown world of Chinese life and feeling such as that audience could have obtained in no other way. The chairman of the committee on taxation of a state legislature addressed a dinner of the Commercial Club of a good-sized town, upon curious features of the state's taxing system. Taxation was at that time a topic of stormy discussion throughout the state. His committee, and the speaker himself, were at the heart of the storm. But in his address that evening there was not a trace of controversy. He gave his fellow-citizens valuable and expert information about a matter of perennial and intimate concern, in terms simple enough to be grasped by everyone present. His dinner speech, good-humored and entertaining, was a distinct contribution to good citizenship.

Sometimes a Serious Appeal.—Once in a while, however, in the hands of a skilled and tactful speaker, the dinner speech may become an earnest plea for a cause. Without losing sight of the amenities of the occasion, without losing his good-nature and his lightness of touch, a master of public address will lift audience and occasion into a mood of lofty seriousness. The address of Governor Brewster of Maine to the engineers carried not only graceful banter but also a note of sober warning. Forty-odd years ago, Dr. Henry C. Potter, Episcopalian bishop of New York, more than once made a speech before the New England Society of New York, on Forefather's Day, the vehicle of a ringing appeal for good citizenship. The memorable addresses on "The New South," by Henry Grady and "Marse" Henry Watterson, were given at New England Society dinners. In 1876, when the country was in serious concern over the Hayes-Tilden election contest, an address at the New England Society dinner on "The Puritan Principle, Liberty under Law," by George William Curtis, editor of *Harper's Weekly*, had a wide influence in calming public feeling and leading toward friendly settlement of the dispute.

The dinners of local societies in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, St. Louis, San Francisco, and elsewhere, are often occasions for little excursions into history, with or without a serious purpose. The speeches at the annual dinners of the Holland Society of New York, naturally enough, run to eulogies of the Dutch, and serious or humorous commentaries upon the history of the race. History, story and legend, ancient and modern, form the sources of the speeches at the dinners of the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick. The dinners of the Southern Society, landmarks in New York's oratorical year, combine the charm of the old South with the energy of the South of today.

Sometimes Your Hobbies, or Personal Experiences.—Many a delightful dinner speech is merely a pleasant account of some hobby of the speaker, such as his adventures in collecting old books or furniture. At the dinner of one group of business men some years ago, the hit of the evening was made by a salesman for a heavy machinery company, a man past middle life, who told of his experiences as an amateur violin maker, and illustrated his remarks with tunes on one of his own violins. At a meeting of a dinner group composed of editors, lawyers, and other professional men, a memorable speech was given by a man who told of his experience collecting elephants—not the full-sized living pachyderm but those little decorative elephants made of jade, ebony or ivory, the joy of orientalists and antique hunters.

Or you may tell of some personal experience of your own, or give a description of a bit of travel. At a dinner of the officers of a certain infantry division one of the guests, a retired admiral, told of running the batteries at Vicksburg under Admiral Farragut as "powder monkey." The next speaker called upon, a colonel of infantry in the World War, followed with a story of the same exploit as he had heard it when a child. His father had commanded one of the Confederate batteries on that historic occasion.

Anyone sufficiently distinguished to be invited to speak at a public dinner is likely to have a "barrel" of experience—to use the term of the old-time Methodist itinerant—from which to draw ample entertainment. He has only to refrain from trying to do something remarkable and permit himself merely to tell what he has seen and done. It is the lesson of Chapter XIX applied to a general audience. You will not be embarrassed any more than you are in friendly conversation; in fact, a dinner address is a type of public speaking that comes very close to conversation.

A Revealing Glimpse into the Speaker's Mind.—In the dinner speech, if given with frankness, sincerity and modesty, there is the same appeal as in autobiographical writing; the listeners are enabled for the time to enter the life of another person. As youths delight to find in the pedagogue out of hours human qualities they did not expect, so people generally are delighted to find these same human qualities in the men who address them in public. In one of Chauncey Depew's dinner speeches a most entertaining account was given of his youthful adventure with a certain deacon in his home town long ago. The deacon, it appears, was moved one evening in prayer-meeting to lift up his voice to his Maker. "O Lord," said he, "Thou knowest that spiritually I am a man of wounds, bruises and putrefying sores." Depew goes on to say that he was deeply impressed by the truth of these words and next day when he met the deacon on the street was moved to commend him: "'Well, deacon,' I said, 'you surely told the Lord the truth about yourself last night,' and I bear on my body to this day the record of that frank comment on the deacon."

Not Too Long.—Do not talk too long. Ten minutes is a good limit. Men whose callings get them into habits of talking at length—lawyers, teachers, men in public life—very often are at a loss when called on for a ten-minute dinner speech. But the

audience has inalienable right, as our famous Declaration phrases it, of "liberty and the pursuit of happiness." The speaker who talks longer than is necessary for the development of his theme, does wrong, even though what he has to say is interesting of itself. On amateur night in the old-time vaudeville house they had a swift and effective recourse if performers wore out their welcome. When a contestant for the favor of the audience went on too long, the cry would arise from the audience: "Get the hook!" whereupon a stage hand stepped from the wings with a large hook of stout wire fixed to the end of a pole, and the would-be artist was gently but firmly removed from the scene. We can all recall occasions at public dinners when "the hook" would have been welcomed by the audience.

You will find it a highly beneficial exercise to set a definite time-limit—ten minutes, or seven minutes—and then hold yourself to that strictly, seeing how much you can say, how fully you can secure the desired effect in that time. In the first few attempts you may find your speech ending before you are ready, but once you have become accustomed to the limit set, you will be independent—able to get up anywhere without fearing that you cannot present in the time available the message you have to give.

"Artistic Seriousness."—Success demands above all things artistic seriousness. All things are lawful in a dinner speech except dullness or too conscious cleverness. Both of these spring from the same cause—failure to put your mind on the listeners in front of you. More than one speaker of wide reputation, alike for learning and for wit, has worn out his welcome because of his too patent consciousness of his own brightness. The graces of language and of voice and delivery are never more pleasing than when employed to brighten up a dinner speech, but there should be no posing. You are not there to show off but to give adequate development of a theme, however slight or playful it may be. Banter, raillery, quick repartee, are all in order; the

last, which is the most piquant and attractive, is of course the most difficult; it may make the whole evening unpleasant if clumsiness or bad taste take the contest of wits out of bounds for even a moment.

If you are attentive to the occasion, and yield yourself to the suggestions it brings, there is pretty certain to flash into your mind, now and then, some comment on the toastmaster, the other speakers, the scene, that will bring a laugh or a smile. The alertness and responsiveness developed in conversation will come into constant use in your dinner speeches. This form of public address might be summed up as the *play* of a ripe mind in full control of the resources of oral communication.

The Toastmaster and His Function.—The success of a public dinner depends in large measure upon the skill of the chairman or toastmaster. Such affairs do not run themselves, and the tact and courtesy of the toastmaster make a great difference in the general atmosphere. He is the pilot. He should have in his own mind a clear picture of the gathering and its significance.

The alumni dinner of a well-known college, some years ago, was held in an unfamiliar and inconvenient room, and the affair at first was rather lacking in enthusiasm. The toastmaster was a graduate of several years standing who had just been elected President of the City Council. As this was his first public appearance since the election, when he rose to start the program he received a generous welcome. Still, he felt, something was lacking. He chanced to notice, however, that one of the older professors, seated far from speaker's table, was briskly engaged in conversation. Bringing down the gavel with a tremendous bang, the dignified young city father solemnly announced, "If Professor Brown will come to order we will proceed with the program!" Another bang of the gavel. Then he added confidentially, with a mischievous grin, "I've been waiting sixteen years for this chance." Professor Brown, oldest and best loved of the faculty, was universally known as a martinet in his class-

room, and the response to that remark set the key of merriment for the evening.

Playing Up the Speakers.—The toastmaster should know the speakers, or know something about them. If possible, he should have a part in choosing them, or at least in determining the order in which they are called upon. If he can in some way weave the successive speeches into a connected series, the interest of the evening is greatly enhanced.

The toastmaster's introduction of the speakers should be brief. He is not there to exhibit his own oratorical gifts but to provide opportunities for others. At a large public dinner in the West some years ago, the principal speaker was a distinguished traveler and writer. The toastmaster's introduction was:

I am told that in the Alps when the traveler desires to view an avalanche, it is the custom for the guide, after placing the traveler in a place of safety, to fire a pistol and thus start a little avalanche. Ladies and gentlemen, I am the pistol. Now look out for the avalanche!

Warmth and Fluency.—At the same time, the toastmaster's introductory remarks should be suggestive and stimulating. The position calls for a man with some fluency and expansiveness of manner. While a person of dry and laconic habit may make a good speech himself, he is not usually successful in introducing others or in maintaining throughout the evening the tone of easy geniality. Not only directly complimentary remarks, but also good-natured raillery and banter, may often be used to advantage. T. A. Daly, the poet, once introduced a number of speakers at a dinner, in verse constructed for the occasion, with rhymes achieved in some cases by breaking the words in the middle or splitting the Mac or the O' from the rest of the name.

The Toastmaster the Pilot.—A point which the toastmaster should watch is the transition from one speech to the next. While it is not his place to delay the proceedings by comments

upon the speech which has just been given, he will not drop the speaker without notice. Instances have been known of toastmasters who introduced each of their speakers in glowing terms, professing warm personal interest in what they were about to hear, and who, when each speech was finished, turned to the next on the program without a sign of interest in what they had heard.

It is the toastmaster's duty to set the dinner program going, keep it moving, smooth out awkward breaks or tangles, and bring it to a cheerful close with a few pleasant words of good-bye. To do this all well involves constant attention to the "other man." When speakers and toastmaster rise to the occasion the result may be an evening of keen artistic pleasure for all concerned.

The Dinner Speech at Its Best.—Most dinner speeches are things of the moment, enjoyed but not recorded. Occasionally, however, special effort is made by a club or association of prominence, such as the New England Society, the Holland Society, and some others in New York and other cities, to record in their annual yearbooks the speeches delivered at their annual dinners. The yearbooks of the New England Society span a period of more than fifty years. It is both interesting and instructive to look over such a file in one of the larger public libraries, and study these familiar addresses of the eminent men of the past half-century. Thirty or forty years ago there was a particularly brilliant group in New York. George William Curtis, Dr. Edward Everett Hale, Bishop Henry C. Potter, Dr. Lyman Abbott, Joseph Choate, General Horace Porter, Bourke Cockran, and Chauncey M. Depew, the consummate master of this most graceful form of the orator's art.

After-dinner speaking of distinction and charm is not confined to New York or to any other of the great centers any more than courage, taste or good breeding. Every now and then some man or woman comes to New York, or Chicago, or San

Francisco, or Washington, from a modest small town background and repeats the miracle of a Lindbergh, a Lincoln, or a Robert Burns. The dinner speech at its best is a distillation of rounded and ripe personal cultivation, and that is perhaps more likely to be found today in smaller cities than in the preoccupied life of the metropolis.

PART VI

THE ELEMENTS OF SPEECH

First among the evidences of an education I name correctness and precision in the use of the mother tongue. . . . The English language is the greatest instrument of communication that is now in use among men upon the earth. In simple word or sonorous phrase it is unequalled as a medium to reveal the thoughts, the feelings and the ideals of humanity. . . . The educated man knows the wide distinction between correct English on the one hand, and pedantic English on the other.—NICHOLAS MURRAY BUTLER.



CHAPTER XXX

THE NATURE AND CONDITIONS OF LANGUAGE

Mastery of Form an Essential in Good Speech.—Thus far the discussion has dealt principally with problems of adjustment to a situation. Only incidental attention has been given to the detail technique of form, to problems of acquiring facility in the selection and arrangement of words and in the mechanics of enunciation, voice, and manner.

Now the importance of easy command of these elements of speech technique becomes increasingly evident the more closely we observe human contacts of any sort. When we are gripped by strong emotion nature takes command, and charges every look, tone and word with appropriate significance. On most occasions, however, we are not thus dominated by feeling. If we are not sensitive to *form* our expression apparatus does not function harmoniously, and hence our speech may be colorless or even misleading, whereas one who has expert command of form gives forceful and pleasing utterance to merely casual remarks. A man may find that his efforts at gentleness and ease are hindered constantly by a voice that is noisy and harsh, or that his efforts for crisp impressiveness fail because his enunciation is habitually indistinct. He may have little "feel" for the ways of arranging words to reinforce his meaning by the power of suggestion.

The Problem of Mastering Form.—How to improve in command of the rudimentary details of speech technique under the conditions of active life today is the most difficult phase of the problem of communication. So far as adjustment is concerned, every contact is a reminder and a lesson. But the firing line is no place for the study of form. In actual conversation or public

address attention is bound to focus upon the thought to be conveyed and the reaction of the persons addressed. Besides, the course of ordinary life rarely calls for a technique of form sufficiently varied and marked in character to develop fully one's power of expression. Mastery of form in talking, as truly as in playing the violin, painting, swimming, golf, must grow out of the experiment and practice of private hours. Such study is necessarily slow. Patient attention has to be given to very minute points.

The chapters which follow take up one by one the elements of speech technique. The ground covered has been studied for ages. What is here undertaken is merely to set down in terms that are serviceable today the consensus of view of competent students of the subject, those of former times as well as those of the present. No exhaustive analysis is attempted, but the discussion is meant to direct attention to essentials, to throw light upon points touched in earlier chapters, and to indicate lines of profitable investigation of special topics.

Obviously, the force of these chapters will vary according to interest and requirements of the individual. For some readers one chapter will be of much greater significance than for others. The references given to other works and the suggestions for further study will naturally be taken up by the individual according to his own needs. Against the background of the survey of human contacts given in earlier chapters you will probably find it easier, now, to make such detailed study of any single item as you may desire. It is not likely that your effort to improve in any one point will now constitute a burden obvious to strangers, in either your conversation or your public address.

What Language Is.—It will simplify all that follows if we pause beforehand to consider the nature and conditions of language as a whole. Language is so close to us, a tool of such constant use, that we hardly ever get a comprehensive view of it: what it is; how it came to be; how it changes; what are its main

features; its advantages as a vehicle for thought; its disadvantages.

And first let us consider the individual language, our own language, for example. By a language we mean a code of signals—sound signals primarily, accompanied by certain looks and postures—which is distinct from any other such code and which is employed by a particular nation or race or group of people. In the world today there are perhaps some thousands of such codes which may be regarded as distinct languages, the communication vehicles of different peoples or races. Some are confined to single tribes of a few hundred persons—in the Amazon jungles of Brazil, we are told, it is not infrequent for a single village to have its separate language. Others are used by vast nations or races: Chinese, English, Spanish, Russian, French, German, Italian, Japanese, and so forth. The English language is used by more than two hundred millions of persons, in all quarters of the globe.

Now, while languages differ from each other with respect to the individual signs employed, the meanings attached to the signs, and their arrangement, all languages agree as to certain primary principles of structure. Each of them consists of a number of individual noises or sounds produced in the throat, mouth and nose—in English there are about fifty of these. These are grouped in a number of standardized blocks of connected sound known as words, each word representing an object, an idea, or a relationship between objects or ideas. When we try to convey a thought—to speak—these sound-groups or words are built together into larger groups which we call phrases, clauses, and sentences. There are standardized patterns for arranging the words in these larger groups, and standardized customs with regard to the utterance of the sound signals and with regard to the looks and postures accompanying them which have to be followed or we are not understood.

Some Useful Books.—As an aid in realizing the range and significance of the most universal and important of humanity's

tools, you will find it instructive and interesting, at this point, to examine one or more books of a general character. An excellent book to begin with, for purposes of orientation, is "Language,"¹ by Professor Sapir of the University of Chicago. It is of moderate size, and it approaches the subject from the broad viewpoint of the anthropologist. Then there is the clearly written inquiry into the problem of how language originated, discussed from the point of view of a psychologist by Professor De Laguna of Bryn Mawr College.² This will throw light upon questions that will probably have been suggested in your own study of the uses and peculiarities of language as employed today. "Language: A Linguistic Introduction to History,"³ by a French scholar, has a special interest for English-speaking readers as a picture of language phenomena familiar to us in our own tongue, as they manifest themselves in other languages.

In particular, there are the works of the Danish scholar, Dr. Otto Jespersen, whose knowledge of English is probably wider and more exhaustive than that of any living Englishman or American. He knows also human nature, the intimate ways of men, women and children, and he writes English as easily as his mother tongue. To get Jespersen's "Language: Its Nature, Development, and Origin"⁴ and keep it at hand, reading a little from time to time as the spirit moves you, will serve in manifold ways to interpret and enrich the understanding of language which observation of life develops for you.

Language a Complex Thing.—The moment one stops to think of this scheme as a whole, one is astonished and very likely dismayed by its extensiveness and complexity. The complexity of language affects both the problem of formulation and that of adaptation to the listener. The individual sounds shade closely into each other, so that unless you take care you may inadvertently give the wrong signal. The telephone companies,

¹ Edward Sapir, *Language*, Henry Holt & Co.

² Grace De Laguna, *Speech: Its Origin and Function*, Yale University Press.

³ J. Vendryes, *Language: A Linguistic Introduction to History*, Alfred Knopf.

⁴ Otto Jespersen, *Language: Its Nature, Development, and Origin*, Henry Holt & Co.

for example, have had to make arbitrary rules of utterance to differentiate the sounds in *five* and *nine*. A certain commuter, it is related, arriving home one evening a little late for dinner, proceeded at once to the dining-room. His wife, busy with dishing-up duties in the kitchen, called brightly: "Daddy, read your letters." Unfortunately, as the message reached the ears of the traveler, it sounded like "Daddy, eat your lettuce!" whereupon the dutiful husband attacked the bowl of lettuce which had been prepared for the family salad.

Then there is the complexity of the word stock. In English our big dictionaries list over 400,000 words and there are, it is said, more than a million more "colloquial" expressions and special coinages, which the dictionaries exclude from their lists. Think of the overlapping in sound and meaning and of the chances of confusion which it brings. Think of the chances of confusion which grow out of the wide variety of formulas of arrangement found in any of the great modern languages, English in particular.

Here is one way to get a picture of the elaborateness and complexity of the great languages. In recent years repeated attempts have been made to work out artificial languages—simpler and more convenient than the "natural" languages—to be used in communication between peoples of different tongues; Volapuk, Esperanto, Ido, etc. These have been growing in use. Now the grammar of Esperanto can be given in about twenty pages, whereas a careful English grammar requires some hundreds of pages.

Language Is Crystallized Habit.—The elaborateness of the "natural" languages is due to their age. Every modern language has been used by many generations, each of which has made some addition, large or small, to vocabulary and usage. English, for example, goes back in recognizable form over 1200 years. Further, every great modern language represents a combination of several earlier languages. Two nations, speaking different tongues, coalesced—usually one conquered the other—and the speech of later generations was a blend of their fathers' lan-

guages. Later on, very likely, other nations or races were incorporated, with further enlargement and modification of the language. English is conspicuous above all other great languages in the extent and variety of these annexations and blendings. It is a composite of Anglo-Saxon (original English), and Norman-French, with large additions from Welsh or British, Danish, Latin, Greek, and later the languages of all parts of the globe.

Inconsistencies in Language Form.—All these blendings have given English an unparalleled wealth of vocabulary, and an exceedingly wide range of formulas of arrangement. But they have set up habits, formulas, which have to be followed, if you are to tell someone else what you mean, and which are full of inconsistencies. The main difficulty as regards the elaborateness of language is not that the language is so big, but that it is so full of peculiarities and exceptions. Now while anyone who has tried to master a foreign language realizes this fact, hardly anyone suspects the extent of inconsistency in his own mother tongue. We take our own language for granted, and that one thing gets us into a lot of trouble.

In truth, every language is a haphazard growth. The generations that have used it and passed it on, used it unconsciously and carelessly. It contains tags of old local fashions and customs. Current enthusiasms have stuck there. Figures of the national life that impressed the mind of the common people have passed into words that remain long after their original meaning is forgotten—words such as *boycott*, *buncombe*, *macadam*, *pasteurize*, *mackintosh*, *landau*, *sedan*, *toady*, *balmoral*, *gerrymander*, *listerine*. The woman flier who remarked that she had “just Lindyed over” in her airplane, was only doing what all the generations before her had done, building out the language by the addition of a term mirroring an interest of the moment. National poems and legends, and great books of various kinds have added their contribution; English is shot through and through with expressions from the English translation of the Bible.

To learn a natural language is therefore a long and difficult undertaking. You can learn Esperanto, they say, in two weeks. But what sort of beginning could you make at French, German, Latin, Russian, Spanish, Italian, or English in that brief time? Of course, in learning Esperanto you are learning only a skeleton code, merely the terms which will convey abstract ideas to the reasoning intellect. What actually carries the message, when *you* talk to *me*, is not the intellectual skeleton but the intimate detail suggestions that lie tangled in the peculiar terms, the inconsistent formulas of arrangement, which are associated with the experiences and emotions of speaker and hearer. Unless you learn these, you do not learn any language so that you can use it with real effect. And to learn these takes time and effort.

Childhood Command Inadequate.—It is commonly supposed that we learn our own language painlessly in early childhood. This is probably an error. Jespersen assures us that the years when the little child is learning his mother tongue are a time of utmost effort and difficulty.⁵ Only, by the time he reaches what is called the age of consciousness he possesses this knowledge without any recollection of having worked for it. But at any rate our childhood study is wholly inadequate, here as in most fields of knowledge, for the needs of adult life. Our child minds are quick and retentive but not discriminating. We merely copy parents and playmates. If they speak indistinctly, mispronounce certain sounds, make errors in grammar, utilize only a few words or a few formulas of arrangement, talk with little or no physical expressiveness—we do the same, without realizing that we are making inadequate use of our mother tongue. If our early surroundings are unfavorable, we may be seriously handicapped. In the United States millions of children of foreign-speaking parents are thus handicapped. Even the favored child of the cultivated home gains only an imperfect command of the tremendous and

⁵ See the discussion of the language of children, in Chapters VII-X of his "Language: Its Nature, Development and Origin."

bewilderingly confused instrument which society must employ for communication of thought.

The schools, of course, help us greatly. What we should do without them, in the complex life of today, is hard to imagine. A chief part of their work for several years consists of filling out and correcting the child's acquaintance with his mother tongue. Later on, the associations of older life—newspapers and magazines, advertisements, conversation, and now the radio—continue the process. Nevertheless, despite all these agencies, who can say that he knows thoroughly his own language? The most accomplished is made to realize, again and again, in his daily experience, that there are features of the common medium which he does not fully understand; he cannot make it do what he wants, even in the matter of recording accurately his own thought. For the purpose of conveying his thoughts to someone else he often finds his command of language most inadequate.

By the time we begin to realize that we lack full command we are likely, as noted in earlier chapters, to have acquired habits of wrong usage or utterance, of which as a rule we are wholly unaware, but which seriously hamper our efforts.

Language Always Changing.—Further, language is always changing, as between one age and another, one community and another, one group or situation and another. Bernard Shaw put the thought whimsically not long ago when he declared, at a gathering of English scholars, that there were 43,000,000 dialects in England, each individual speaking in his own way and a little differently from anyone else. As a natural language is only the very much mixed communication custom of perhaps millions of people in widely varying circumstances, it is bound to be changing insensibly all the time.

Moreover, the direction and rate of change will vary in different communities, and with different occupations and social positions. A striking instance of varying rate of change is found in the difference between the English spoken today in England

and the English spoken in the mountains of Tennessee and Kentucky by the descendants of Englishmen who settled there two centuries and more ago. The English of the mountaineers is surprisingly like that of their seventeenth and eighteenth century ancestors in England, Scotland and Ireland. In busy England, during these two hundred years, vocabulary, pronunciation and usage have changed with great rapidity. In the lonely mountain communities of Kentucky the vocabulary, pronunciation and usage of pre-Revolutionary times have survived with much less change.

Allowing for Differing Language Usage.—In our talk with other people we need to allow, all the time, for these changes in language use resulting from different environment and influences. Then we shall be less ready to assume that the formulation which satisfies our own taste will be clear and pleasing to the person to whom we have to give our message. We shall be less hasty in our interpretation of the meaning and the intention of those who address us in a form which to us is strange. Consider the case of a Vermonter talking with an Alabama cotton-planter; a Chicagoan with a man from a Kentucky hill-village; a bookkeeper with a coal-miner; a steel-puddler with a notions clerk. Each member of these ill-assorted pairs has a local specialist's acquaintance with the language code; "pitcher" and "catcher," though English is the mother tongue of both of them, are familiar with different sets of signals.

"Simplifying" Language Impossible.—In English, because of the many languages which have entered into its structure, there is an exceptional amount of confusion of usage. Repeated attempts have been made to standardize or simplify our language but generally with unfortunate results. In the eighteenth century the school-teachers tried to lay out English grammar and usage on the lines of Latin. They set up a number of rules and taboos, which they succeeded in teaching to several generations of young people, but which were actually opposed to the natural ways of

the language. People tried to obey these school rules when on parade, but held to their old custom at other times. Some of these taboos still walk the earth to trouble us.

In recent years the schools have been trying to simplify the problem of mastery of language by stripping off the old taboos, striking for the "minimum essentials" of traditional English usage. That is excellent, for school children. But it is not enough for adults. We must remember that there is danger in trying to simplify a thing that is essentially many-sided and various, like the old language of a great race. If you "simplify" the intricate harmonies of a great musician, what you get is not the master's music. So with our vast, inconsistent, shifting English language. It is essentially intricate and confused. Your only resource is to develop your controls, to develop in yourself an attitude of sensitiveness to its peculiarities of usage and readiness of adaptation to different persons and situations.

Twisting Language to Get New Effects.—There is one other feature of language—any language—which is probably most troublesome of all. People are incessantly and deliberately breaking down exactness in their own use of the medium. This is in large measure the explanation of the appearance of slang, and of the coinage of such expressions as "I just Lindyed over." But in addition, all literature is full of what is called poetic license—which consists in saying one thing in terms of something else. When John Keats wrote of the

"watcher of the skies
When a new planet *swims* into his ken,"

he was deliberately misusing words. And every reader applauds him for it. The passages from verse in Chapter XXI above, those from public addresses in Part V, and in fact, all dynamic writing and speech are full of this deliberate modification of language, by which old expressions and formulas are twisted to get a new effect.

The lawyers are against such twistings of meanings, for they have to put things down in literal terms. So with the scientists, the engineers. These—and all of us when we have to make plain matter-of-fact statements that can be measured—want to pin down language into definite exact forms, like algebra. The schools are on both sides of the controversy. They tell us with one breath: Keep your mother tongue pure! Preserve the tongue of Shakespeare and Milton! With the next breath they bid us study the works of the poets, and their cunning artistry in originating expressive word-combinations.

The truth is, all of us yield to this impulse to twist language to fit the needs of the moment. We shall continue to do it—the lawyer and engineer in their hours of ease just as readily as the poet, the newspaper columnist, or the doughboy in the field. We do not want our language turned into algebra. Undoubtedly, it might be highly desirable if we could work out an auxiliary algebra-language for use merely in matter-of-fact relations. Esperanto and the other artificial languages are attempts in this direction. Only, everybody must pledge himself not to take liberties with the new matter-of-fact technical language for purposes of effectiveness, or in a little while we shall be back where we started.

The Problem of Improvement.—Here then we have our language, inexhaustibly rich in suggestive power but elaborate, complicated, always shifting, and each of us constantly engaged in giving it an individual twist. What shall we do to improve our command of this extraordinary medium so that we can convey our thoughts directly, easily, surely, to the other man—in little things and large?

In a queer little novel, "Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia," written in England just before the American Revolution, by Dr. Samuel Johnson, a sage enumerates for an ardent young prince with intelligentsia leanings, the difficulties in the way of writing poetry. The prince interrupts the recital at last with, "Enough!

You have convinced me that no one can possibly be a poet." When we pause to consider the chances of error in the everyday activities of speech, resulting from the nature of the code which we must employ and the imperfections, physical, mental or emotional, of "pitcher" and of "catcher," we may be tempted to a similar conclusion.

The Solution—Development of Responsiveness.—What can we do? Well, here also our best reliance is our reaction to a situation. In playing tennis you find that you have an automatic impulse to return the ball to the point from which it came. To deflect it and send it to another part of the court takes an effort. That is because your attention is concentrated on the other player, and all your powers work together to return the ball to him. Something like that is the case in speech, when we are alert and attentive to what we are doing. Put your mind on the other man. If you do that, you will find yourself, somehow, picking the right words, arranging them in the right order, and dramatizing them with the right looks and postures.

That has been proved in thousands of instances, in all ages. You have found it true now and then in your own experience. "When I get hit on the nose," remarked a well-known advertising man, "I have no trouble in coming back. I can talk then, and say the thing I want to. But I can't talk that way unless I get waked up by some outside prodding." The problem of command of speech might be restated as that of learning how to put yourself in a frame of mind to respond at once, vividly, to the prodding of the situation. Then you can trust your innate and developed powers to react properly.

Studying the Technique.—Only, the tennis-player needs a certain foundation of technical skill—he must have ready command of all the various "strokes" of the game—or he cannot send the ball back at all. The man who has only his childhood acquaintance with the words or formulas of his mother tongue, or who speaks indistinctly or impassively, cannot carry out the im-

pulses that come to him. That is the situation of too many of us.

In the five chapters that follow we shall consider, accordingly, the words that constitute the thought symbols of the language; the patterns according to which the words are grouped and arranged in speech; the manner in which the word-groups are sounded and the vocal mechanisms employed in the process; and the eye-signals—looks and postures—by which the word-groups are accompanied when uttered.

CHAPTER XXXI

WORDS

The Magic of Words.—Man's imagination has always been fascinated by the power of words. In old-time magic a prominent feature was the repetition of certain words and phrases: "Open sesame" in the Arabian Nights story is an instance, and grotesque relics of others are found in children's counting rhymes—"Eeny-meeny-miney-mo," and so on. Sometimes the "magic words" were written down and worn around the neck as an amulet.

Very likely this peculiar respect for words, almost universal among the races of men, has grown from the experience which everyone now and then has had of the power of the right words on a particular occasion. A few right words, and the message flashes into the hearer's mind, even though he is ignorant, inattentive, or hostile. Modern advertising is built very largely on this fact; it operates through skilful selection of words. Keen and serious thinkers in every age have recognized this tremendous power of "right words" and have sought to discover and explain the secret.

In an address on "Truth and Politics" Stanley Baldwin, Prime Minister of Great Britain, says this:

Words are the currency of love and friendship, of making and marketing, of peace and war. Nations are bound and loosed by them. Three or four simple words can move waves of emotion through the hearts of multitudes, like great tides of the sea: "Lest we forget"; "Patriotism is not enough."

On the other hand, everyone knows the hindrance to communication from the use of wrong words, when we stumble along,

wasting time, creating confusion, and often, entirely without intention, giving offense. Everyone, probably, would admit his need of better command of the word resources of the language. And the sure and ready command of words is even more important for speech than for writing. Speech is of the moment. You have to say your say at once—you cannot revise. In speech, besides, the standard of word selection is more severe than in writing because the words must be not only accurate but natural; talk must sound easy and spontaneous.

First Steps—Accuracy in Common Talk.—There is no lack of books on the subject of words, hundreds of them: Dictionaries; synonym books; special lists; books that analyze meanings, and trace relationships; books of phrases. To know where to begin or how to proceed is a puzzle.

About one thing, however, there can be no question: Success with daily communication problems depends largely on certainty of the meaning of the words which you employ in ordinary speech, and those which others employ in talking to you. This may seem an unnecessary caution. But most of us are very lax about this simple matter. Each of us knows accurately the terms of his daily business; somewhat less accurately, but pretty well, the usual terms of personal and domestic life that he has heard and used since infancy; and a number of others to which his attention has chanced to be specially drawn at one time or another. But for most of us, the sum of the words as to which we are really *sure* is after all not very large. Of a great many of those we daily employ our knowledge is rather hazy. Here is a word that has been familiar to us for years—perhaps we utter it every day; we have never thought of looking it up. Some day our use of it is challenged and we discover that our conception has been slightly incorrect; the word does not mean just what we supposed. Every message containing it which has gone out from us, or come to us, has been slightly inaccurate and may have made trouble for us of which we knew nothing. The number of everyday words

which we use all our life long on faith is probably larger for every one of us than we realize.

Testing Your Knowledge.—If you should give yourself a little test on this point every day for four or five weeks—picking passages at random from the magazines, newspapers, or books that come your way in ordinary experience and actually checking every word by the dictionary, as you do when beginning to study a foreign language—you might discover some surprising holes in your actual knowledge of the meanings of everyday words. Try it and see. Filling these holes is a good first step toward control of language. You will find that doing this one thing will bring an improvement which you can recognize; it will make your ordinary talk clearer and more concise, and help you to catch the point more certainly in what others say.

For this first-aid nothing is better than a good “desk dictionary”: the Webster Collegiate Dictionary;¹ the Standard Desk Dictionary;² the Winston Dictionary.³ The little vest-pocket dictionaries—dear to the stenographic sisterhood—are useless here; they have a use, we shall see presently, but they give no help as to meanings. And the great unabridged editions are rather too big for the quick consultation which is all you want just now.

Begin your study with what is nearest. Perfect your grasp of the everyday terms that you suppose you know and then *use* them correctly.

Eliminating Useless “Fillers.”—One other thing you can do for yourself at the outset of your systematic study of speech. You can check a certain laxness, to which most of us are prone, in the everyday treatment of the common words whose meaning we know well. We are all apt to be careless about complete statement of our ideas in common talk. We use an astonishing number of fillers, token-words, especially in indicating relationships and qualities: “Something like that,” “Along that line,” “On

¹ Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, G. and C. Merriam Co.

² The Standard Desk Dictionary, Funk & Wagnalls Co.

³ The Winston Simplified Dictionary, John C. Winston Co.

that order," "From that angle," "Such as that." Curiously enough, this fault is especially prevalent among persons of swift thought and ready power of arranging their ideas. Naturally "there's a reason" for much of this indefiniteness and lack of completeness. We do not want *all* our statements sharply outlined. Our purpose, often, in using a certain word or set of words, is merely to make a cushion for certain other words, to suggest a background. It is an effort for perspective. The artist who works with paint, crayon, or camera makes the edges and distances of his picture somewhat indefinite. If every leaf on the trees at the back were as sharply outlined as the figures in front we could not see the picture as a whole. In accomplishing the same effect in speech the vague filler-terms have a real value. But we need to use them with discretion.

Persons of eager minds, for example, too impatient to present an idea as a whole, often throw in colorless token-expressions because they do not want to interrupt the rush of their ideas to hunt for exact words to express minor steps in their thought. Usually they piece out their meaning effectively by vocal or facial expression, so that for the moment you get a fair general picture of the idea. But as a result, the talk of these lively persons is often highly indefinite. The fault is like that which appears in the handwriting of quick thinkers. A brilliant clergyman who writes his sermons in language that is as flowing and direct as extempore talk, writes a hand that is illegible to anyone but himself; the first part of a word, *th—* or *al—* or *pr—*, is clear enough, but the rest of the word is represented by one or two hasty strokes that may mean anything. In speech, of course, such carelessness is even more troublesome than in handwriting because less likely to be watched by the sinner and remedied. People who permit themselves to use too many of these filler-words in their talk, who try to give too much background, handicap themselves greatly. Their remarks, when the hearer tries to recall them, seem indefinite and fragmentary. Often they get the reputation of being shallow or crude in thought, although their ideas may actually

be acute and discriminating. No one wants the coding of his thought to be defective, nor does he want to talk in jargon, or a sort of personal shorthand.

In the effort to clarify your notions of everyday terms you have the help of a code-book, the dictionary. In the effort to cut away useless filler-words you will have little help from outside; you will have to learn to watch yourself. Concentrating on the other man, remembering not to try to say *more* at a time than tired or busy listeners will take in easily, is your chief reliance.

Study of Words a Varied and Endless Activity.—Thoroughgoing effort at real mastery of words will carry you far afield. It necessitates close and constant observation of the way the people around you talk, of the way you yourself talk, and similar scrutiny of the words you and others employ in writing. It necessitates also systematic use of standard works of reference, not only to check your observations, but with the definite aim of enlarging and making more exact your knowledge. No thorough treatment of this complex and absolutely essential subject can be given in one chapter, or in a dozen. The aim here is merely to chart certain courses you may follow, and to explain certain guiding principles that will aid in utilizing most profitably the many books that are available and the inexhaustible laboratory of life.

Not How Many Words But How They Are Used

The first of these principles concerns the number of different words required for effective speech, the size of your vocabulary. The principle is this: The mere number of words anyone uses has little to do with real command of language; that is a question of the accurate and appropriate use of those you do employ.

The Fetish of "Enlarging Your Vocabulary."—A good deal of trouble has been caused by rough and ready methods of "vocabulary building" recommended in certain "popular" books, or what have been termed "get-wise-quick" courses. "Enlarge

your vocabulary," we are told. "The more words you know, the better you can express yourself." That sounds plausible. Each of us, often enough, feels at a loss for the right word, unable to express a thought with exactness in brief terms. We wake up, now and then, to a realization that we are using the same word over and over, though feeling vaguely that it does not equally fit our meaning every time. Only, it is a word we are familiar with and in the habit of using; it jumps to our lips and we use it as the thing that is immediately at hand. Then our minds go to the big dictionaries with their 400,000 words, or the desk dictionaries with their 75,000, and we think we could improve our own working stock by studying the dictionary and domesticating more words. Many a man has seriously undertaken the task of reading the dictionary systematically, and learning a certain number of words a day.

The general idea of enlarging your speech vocabulary in this way is wrong. It is based on confused thinking. Reading the dictionary is a beneficial habit which, if steadily pursued, becomes highly interesting. It aids definitely in the ability to read intelligently and in the "catching" function generally, the power of understanding what others say, or *mean* to say. In the long run and indirectly it may improve the "pitching" function. But it will not help in that directly. It may even lead you astray through accentuating the impulse to soliloquize.

For only a small proportion of the words in even the desk dictionaries are such as you would ever use in speech. The vast majority would be unintelligible to your listeners. They are either such as were used in former times but are now obsolete; or they are local words used colloquially in certain regions of the vast English-speaking world; or they are technical terms peculiar to some particular science, profession, or branch of industry. Even after these special classes have been eliminated, the number of words listed in a desk dictionary, not to speak of the unabridged, is so great that the method of indiscriminate domestication—learning and peppering your talk with words that strike your own

fancy as you read—is likely to lead only to confusion. For most persons, to start on such a task is likely to result only in weariness and in abandoning before long the really important effort for better command of the signal code. The truth is, probably, that you know already practically all the words you require for effective and accurate communication.

An Inventory—The Words You Already Know.—The essential thing is your ability to make the *most* of the words you know. Why not take an inventory of the words you know and use? There is no better way of beginning the actual study of language.

Suppose you obtain now one of the vestpocket dictionaries that sell for about 75 cents. Run through this and check with a pencil *every word you know*. Do not stop to think; just check quickly those you recognize at first glance. On some pages you will recognize only a few; on other pages you will be checking nearly all. Go through the little dictionary to the end of the alphabet. It may take you a number of hours but it will be time well spent. The total will represent very nearly the maximum of your personal signal code, aside from a number of special terms of your profession or business, which will not be given in the little dictionary.

Size of Individual Vocabularies.—The New York *Times* of March 18, 1917, printed a letter from "A. P. H.," who said that he "had a college training and several years' newspaper experience and was now a plain working farmer." He tells how he made actual count of all the words he knew, exclusive of proper names. The number was 22,937.

Since that time this subject of the extent of individual vocabularies has been much investigated. A writer in *American Speech* for October 1926 says: "It seems pretty well established that well read and studious men and women have vocabularies ranging from 33,000 to 70,000 words." The chances are that the score of any man or woman in active life today will run over 20,000.

Dr. Frank H. Vizetelly, editor of the Standard Dictionary, has this to say :

The average physician, lawyer and minister have vocabularies exceeding that of Shakespeare's writings, which included 23,000 words. The average minister is acquainted with 25,000 vocables, 14,000 of which occur in the Bible. Woodrow Wilson, in his books, used 60,000 distinct terms.

The average individual, not specifically educated, knows between 3,000 and 10,000 words. The man who sells roasted chestnuts on the corner probably knows 3,000 words or more; a child of six more than 1,600 words.

In discussing the vocabularies of physicians and lawyers Dr. Vizetelly points out that the former must know the names of 1,700 parts of the body, 1,300 bacteria, about 1,000 diseases, 300 poisons, 500 pigments, 900 tests and tumors, and 10,000 chemicals and drugs, while the latter must be familiar with the 13,000 legal terms which appear in the "most popular law lexicon."

The Words You Use Every Day.—Now comes a more important part of the inventory. Run through the little dictionary again, but this time check the words you *use habitually in everyday conversation*. Be careful about this count. Do not include those you use now and then, but only such as come to your lips spontaneously day after day. The result may surprise you. One man of rather wide reading and studious habits, whose work consists largely of talking with people, found in such a count that his own "everyday working vocabulary" included only about 1800 words. A report issued a few years ago by the Committee of Unskilled Labor and Americanization of the National Association of Corporation Schools printed a "Proposed General Vocabulary for Foreign-born Use." It contained 1,000 words.

The fact is, with any of us, the words which he uses every day are only a small proportion of those he knows. He may have a reading acquaintance with as many as 40,000 or 50,000. He is not likely to use habitually more than 2,000 or 2,500. These are the words in which he *thinks*.

The Basic Stock of Words.—Most of these words he has known since childhood. Everyone else knows them also. They are the words in which everybody thinks. This body of 2,000 or 2,500 words in fact represents the basic stock of usable words for your community. It varies somewhat according to the individual's calling and environment, but the variation is less than might be expected. If you examine the words of any conversation, or public speech, or even of any writing, you will find most of them to be from this basic stock, used over and over. Says Professor McKnight of Ohio State University in "English Words and Their Background:"⁴

It has recently been pointed out that one-fourth of the task of expression in English is accomplished by nine words: *and, be, have, it, of, the, to, will, and you*. It will be observed that all nine of these words are of native origin. Further it is pointed out that these nine words with thirty-four others form half of the words actually used, and these additional thirty-four likewise are, without exception, of native origin: *about, all, as, at, but, can, come, day, dear, for, get, go, hear, her, if, in, me, much, not, on, one, say, she, so, that, these, they, this, though, time, we, with, write, your*.

Little Change from Age to Age.—Further, this basic stock of words remains substantially the same from age to age. A few years ago Professor E. L. Thorndike of Columbia University published a list of the 10,000 words found to occur most frequently in writing,⁵ based upon a count of about four and a half million words from the English classics, children's books, school books, correspondence, newspapers, and books about trades. He arranged them in the order of frequency, listing separately the 2,500 given as ranking highest in wide and frequent use. If you should check these 2,500 words given as most frequent in *writing*, against such works as Franklin's "Autobiography" and Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe" in the eighteenth century, "Pilgrim's Progress" and the "Diary of Samuel Pepys" in the seventeenth

⁴ George H. McKnight, *English Words and Their Background*, D. Appleton & Co.

⁵ Edward L. Thorndike, *The Teacher's Word Book*, Teachers College Bulletin, Columbia University.

century, and the King James translation of the Bible in Shakespeare's day, as well as against modern advertising copy, you would find the changes, as regards even the basic word stock for writing, surprisingly few from age to age.

No count of this sort has been made for the words of *talk*, nor could it be made with any thoroughness, because the records of the talk of former days, as preserved in printed sermons and speeches, in the dialogue of comic plays, stories, and fables, are comparatively few. Nevertheless, such evidence as we have tends to show that the parallelism between the common speech words of today and those of older times is even more close than in the case of writing. Of course, as the dominant callings gradually shift with changing social and industrial life, the basic word stock shifts also, and in recent generations, with the advent of steam, electricity, automobiles, and modern city life, the change would naturally be faster. Nevertheless, most of the 2,000 or so intimate, habitual words of your own speech and of that of most other persons today, are the same as were used by our grandfathers and grandmothers of two hundred or three hundred years ago.

Command of the Basic Stock.—Now, obviously, the chief need of most of us is proper utilization of the resources of the basic words in our vocabulary. You will find that persons in any line of activity who are particularly successful in conveying their ideas to others in everyday talk do so largely because of their exceptional command of this primary word stock. They have developed ingenuity and readiness in combining these simple terms into effective forms, getting more “tunes” and better ones out of the familiar elements. There is a certain New York physician who, years ago, on his graduation from the medical school, was presented by the shrewd and kindly dean with a volume of the “Speeches and Addresses” of John Bright, the English statesman of Victorian times, to “teach you some one-syllable words.” The young doctor took the lesson to heart, and studied his Bright.

Today his common conversation with acquaintances and patients is notable for its effective use of short and simple words.

Unless one's talk is composed chiefly of this basic stock it is not readily understood by most hearers; it sounds to them queer and unnatural and may even be resented. Too many specialists, unfortunately—physicians, lawyers, engineers and others in technical callings—who do their thinking largely in technical terms, make the error of using their technical vocabulary in common talk. That is almost like wearing their laboratory aprons on the street. When the specialist talks in that way he is not really reaching the other man's mind, not communicating his thought, but merely thinking aloud. As for the unlucky souls who deliberately seek to adorn their talk with large or uncommon words, the result of misdirected perusal of the dictionary, they are to be pitied. Their obvious desire to show off takes away all convincing quality from their presentation of a case. Moreover, the effect of their inappropriate terms is gawky and comic, like jewelry on working clothes.

The method followed by the New York doctor in learning to talk in the words in which ordinary people think may be worth imitating. You might very profitably examine for yourself those "Speeches and Addresses" of John Bright, or those of Theodore Roosevelt, Eugene Debs, Booker Washington, David Lloyd George, Governor Alfred E. Smith, and study the varied use these men make of the basic word stock of the language.

The Reading Vocabulary—The Reserve Stock.—But of course on most occasions speech requires also some use of the words of the reading vocabulary—the reserve stock. These words serve to repeat an idea in slightly different form, or they enable us to express briefly a complex idea—one long word is better, if understood, than a series of short ones. They make it easier, also, to give the thought a particular degree or shade, since they are usually more exact than the more familiar terms, and identified with only one *idea* or a portion of an idea. Those who urge the

enlargement of one's vocabulary through study of the dictionary are really thinking of the occasional use of these reserve words.

Dictionaries and Works of Reference—The Right Use.—

Here the dictionary comes rightly into the picture. Even with these words, however, there is little use in going to the dictionary first. The right way to mastery of the reserves of the language, for purposes of speech, is not through aimless forays into dictionary lists. It is rather through developing the habit of reading good writers of popular appeal and of listening attentively to persons who talk well, and then going to the dictionary, and to other sources, for thorough investigation of words which specially catch your attention.

When a word catches your attention—the occasions will not be very frequent, after all; a few in a week perhaps—you will find it profitable to see what is said of the word in standard books of reference.

The Standard Works of Reference.—No amount of reading, no mere study of books will insure mastery of words in speech. That comes only through intelligent *use*, through observation and experiment. You need, however, the authentic information supplied by standard works of reference. These might be grouped in five classes.

1. Dictionaries. You will need, undoubtedly, an unabridged dictionary, either the New International Dictionary,⁶ the new three-volume Century Dictionary,⁷ or the Standard Dictionary.⁸ In making full use of their resources you will find it very helpful to get an interesting little book by Professor Martin Flaherty of the University of California, "How to Use the Dictionary."⁹ Best of all the dictionaries for full realization of the resources of the language is the great "Oxford Dictionary"—or to give its

⁶ Webster's New International Dictionary, G. & C. Merriam Co.

⁷ The New Century Dictionary of the English Language, Century Co., 3 volumes. Sold only through P. F. Collier & Son Co.

⁸ The Standard Dictionary, Funk & Wagnalls Co.

⁹ Martin Flaherty, How To Use The Dictionary, The Ronald Press Company.

full title, "A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles." ¹⁰ It fills fourteen large volumes, the first of which appeared in 1888 and the last in 1927. In it you will find given, for each word, definitions and pedigrees common to all standard dictionaries and in addition a selection of brief quotations from English writers of the last thousand years who have used the word. Even if you do not have a copy for yourself you will find it of inestimable value to form the habit of consulting the Oxford Dictionary at a public library. See what it has to say, for example, about these words: *case*; *altruism*; *boycott*; *mackintosh*; *tawdry*.

2. Books Which List Synonyms and Antonyms. You ought to have on your desk or handy shelf one or more of the collections of synonyms now available in moderate priced editions. In Crabbe's "English Synonyms" ¹¹ you will find an interesting treatment of groups of words closely allied in meaning. The distinctions are carefully given and quotations from the English writers of prose and verse supply the reader with illustrations of correct usage. In Fernald's "English Synonyms, Antonyms and Prepositions" ¹² more than 7,500 synonyms and more than 3,700 antonyms are presented. When you look up words in this book do not neglect the notes on prepositions; the wrong prepositions will often make the right words ineffectual.

3. Roget's "Thesaurus." ¹³ Of this unique book, an English writer in *John o' London's Weekly* has this to say:

A writer is frequently "stumped" for a word. He knows it exists and that it would express his meaning. He has a haunting mental image of some quality for which several words occur to him, but none gives him the image back. Or he has written a word which is exact, but is not rhythmical or euphonious, and he wishes to exchange it for another. He may feel that the word he has written is too colloquial, or not colloquial enough. But the word he wants has slipped, like a coin, into some chink of his brain, and he cannot get it out. What is he to do? He should consult Roget's "Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases." This work,

¹⁰ A New English Dictionary On Historical Principles, Oxford University Press.

¹¹ George Crabbe, English Synonyms Explained in Alphabetical Order, Harper & Bros.

¹² J. C. Fernald, English Synonyms, Antonyms and Prepositions, Funk & Wagnalls Co.

¹³ P. M. Roget, Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases, T. Y. Crowell Co.

which has never been superseded, or, I believe, even imitated, is a dictionary reversed. It gives words for meanings instead of meanings for words. . . .

You are writing something about light, or color, or photography, and you must refer to that property of light which produces chemical changes. You write down — rays. For the life of you, you cannot recall that word. You know it to be the technical and only possible word, and you have lost it. — rays! You look at the chimney pots. You draw on your blotting pad. It won't come and time is passing. To search an encyclopaedia may not be possible, and would be tedious. But Roget! You turn to the index, to the word *light*, and find a whole column filled with synonyms, analogues, metaphorical uses, transferred meanings, and what not, all relating to light. At a glance you see that the word you want will be associated with "luminosity," Section 420. You turn to Section 420 and find a long, well-arranged catalogue of words relating to light in its meaning of luminosity. Running your eye quickly through groups beginning with such unwanted words as day, glow, flash, spark, lustre, chiaroscuro, garish, and so forth—each the leader of a little company of like words—you suddenly come to your lost sheep, the now perfectly remembered word ACTINIC. Nothing more. You had the meaning, now the word itself is restored to you. Consider the value of such aid!

Again, you may in some connection write "savour," or "flavour," or "taste," or smack and be dissatisfied with them all, knowing (for you have to know it) that there is a word better to your immediate purpose. You cannot think of it, but Roget gives it to you. Is it not TANG?

4. Handbooks of Usage. Very recently two excellent handbooks of usage have been published, which give in concise form the custom of persons who use language carefully, together with the editor's opinion as to points sometimes questioned. One of these is English, edited by H. W. Fowler,¹⁴ editor of the Oxford Dictionary, the other American, edited by Professor Krapp.¹⁵ It would be well worth your while to have both of these books. Placing them side by side and comparing the treatment of the same word or expression in current British usage and current American usage, will call your attention to minute points of difference in

¹⁴ H. W. Fowler, *Dictionary of Modern English Usage*, Clarendon Press.

¹⁵ George Philip Krapp, *A Comprehensive Guide to Good English*, Rand-McNally Co.

the use of our mother tongue on the two sides of the ocean today.

Other Books on Word-Study.—In addition to the works already mentioned in this chapter you might find it helpful to have on your desk or reference shelf such other admirable volumes as that by Archdeacon Trench, "On the Study of Words,"¹⁶ one of the older works of its kind, or "Words and Their Ways in English Speech," by Greenough and Kittredge.¹⁷ Or, among recent books: Professor McKnight's "English Words and Their Background";¹⁸ and Weekley's "Romance of Words."¹⁹ You might find it profitable to go to the public library and see these books for yourself so that you may decide which you want on your own desk. It will pay to have some of them within easy reach.

In this province of your labors and studies you will remember that standard works of a more general character have help to offer here as well as elsewhere. Such are: Professor Lounsbury's "History of the English Language";²⁰ Mencken's "American Language";²¹ and Krapp's "Knowledge of English."²² These touch many phases of the problem of language control.

It is not to be expected that any man will read such works of reference from cover to cover. They should be on your reference table ready when you need them. Do not make their use a task, but a pleasant resort, an adjunct to the normal curiosity we have about things in life. Certainly the vogues and fashions in words will prove as interesting as the changes of style in dress or in any other human custom.

"Reserve Words"—Their Use in Talk.—What sort of words should the reserve stock include? "Book words" of course—abstract terms; words for purposes of classification and general-

¹⁶ R. C. Trench, *On the Study of Words*, Henry Holt & Co.

¹⁷ Greenough and Kittredge, *Words and Their Ways in English Speech*, The Macmillan Co.

¹⁸ George H. McKnight, *English Words and Their Background*, D. Appleton & Co.

¹⁹ Ernest Weekley, *The Romance of Words*, Dutton & Co.

²⁰ T. R. Lounsbury, *History of the English Language*, Henry Holt & Co.

²¹ H. L. Mencken, *The American Language*, Knopf.

²² George P. Krapp, *Knowledge of English*, Henry Holt & Co.

ization. Such words have been built up through ages of use to give an exact shade of meaning. They are learned words, largely derived from the Latin. We have to draw upon them for precise expression of abstract ideas and details. Often the simple and familiar terms of daily intercourse are inadequate for the special needs of a situation. To achieve accuracy and definite detail of thought we have recourse to the longer and stranger words of Latin origin—for example: assistant, collaborator, colleague, consultant, confidant, adviser, counsellor. With such words our intellectual processes are served. Thus the language of action requires only the words of the basic stock: “. . . Head cut open and one leg broken in the accident. . . .” But the unemotional language of thought demands terms from the reserve: “. . . Accident resulting in a compound fracture of the left femur and slight lacerations of the scalp. . . .”

Vocabulary Tests.—An interesting way to test your reserve stock of words is provided by the *Inglis Vocabulary Tests*, A, B, and C, which you can obtain at small cost from Ginn and Company, Publishers, Boston. You might order a number of copies sufficient for your family circle, or for your special corner of the club lounge. The element of game or contest makes these tests appeal to persons of all ages. The results are interesting and helpful.

Extent of Vocabulary—The Sum of the Matter.—With respect to the extent of your vocabulary, suppose you work on some such basis as this: First, learn to employ with accuracy and ingenuity the two thousand or so basic words of daily use, pruning out vulgarisms and rather avoiding terms that are purely local in character. Then, in employing words from the reserve stock, select such as are specific, concrete, colorful and not too far from common knowledge. Long, generalizing, abstract terms are to be avoided so far as possible at all times. Finally, one reserve word to a group of sentences is a wise proportion. Beware of letting yourself use a string of strange words together.

Not Meanings Only, but Suggestions

Denotation versus Connotation.—The second general principle to be borne in mind in studying words concerns a fact which we all know yet all continually forget. In the accurate and effective use of words we need to consider their implications and suggestions, not their dictionary meanings only. Indeed, accurate command of dictionary meanings is only the beginning of command of words. Not encyclopedia writers, but novelists and poets, copy-writers, popular speakers, are the experts.

The dictionaries set down the literal meanings of a word, the sense or senses in which the public, by general custom, has agreed to accept it. It is, of course, absolutely necessary to have such agreement about the signals of our code. In fact, persons whose work calls for special precision in their statements often find it necessary to supplement the dictionary and limit still further the meanings of words. Writers on scientific topics, to make sure of not being misunderstood, often print in their books a list of the terms they employ with careful definition of their exact meaning as then used. Various technical associations have found it necessary to establish committees on nomenclature. The lawyers have had to carry this tendency still further. There is a huge twelve-volume work, "Judicial and Statutory Definitions of Words and Phrases," which lists a number of terms that have come up in connection with important decisions in the courts of law, words whose legal meanings have been definitely fixed in a judicial decision. But consider the remark of Bertrand Russell, the English scientist and philosopher, in his book on "The Analysis of Mind": "The use of the word comes first, and the meaning is to be distilled out of it by observation and analysis."

Upon this the article quoted above from *John o' London's Weekly* comments as follows:

How true this is becomes very clear when we consider very simple words which all men use correctly and no one but a lexicographer is called upon to define. Take such words as *flat*, *height*, *best*, *time*, *way*,

chair, walk, give, boot, dry, look, and a thousand more. I have often thought that lexicographers must sweat blood when they sit down to define such words. It is, however, an amusing and profitable exercise to take a number of simple words and write down their meanings, and then compare your definitions with those in a good dictionary. How would you define the verb "to *sit*"?

The Connotations of Familiar Words.—We have seen in Chapter XXX that the words of a living language are continually employed not with technical or legal accuracy but in senses growing out of current fashion or individual impulse, which differ more or less from their dictionary meanings. This practice is common to all languages. It has recently been the subject of much investigation by men of science. Professor Edward Sapir of the University of Chicago, as an anthropologist, is concerned with man's use of language as a tool. In an address before the National Council of Teachers of English at Philadelphia, November, 1927, he said:

The two aspects of speech, expressive and referential, are rarely seen in their purity. In the workaday world they are constantly intertwining their functions in countless compromises, and it is this highly variable process of compromise that is so largely responsible for the misunderstandings and clashes of human contact. If words really meant what we say they mean, there should be little room for misunderstandings, but it is of course only too true that they rarely mean quite what in our moments of intellectual isolation we claim as their due significance but that they convey thousands of connotations over and above this ostensible meaning of theirs.

Consider again some of those words of the basic stock which you have known since you were a baby, which you use perhaps every hour of the day. Take one of the following: *employee, friendship, loyal, terrible, likely*; just what is the idea you mean to convey when you utter it? How does this meaning differ according as you are addressing one or another individual? In such cases the dictionaries and even the synonym books carry you only a little way. They set down usual meanings, but they give little help in determining just what Bill Jones intended to convey

when he told *you* a certain event was "likely"; just what Sallie Jones meant by "terrible." It is your own word-sense that must tell you the precise shades of meaning which these words—and most of the others that we exchange with other people in common talk—are meant to convey. In fact, the dictionaries and synonym books help us least of all with the words that are most familiar—the suggestions which these carry with them are far too many and too subtle to be set down in a brief dictionary summary.

When words "stir our feelings," as Stanley Baldwin says, it is through their suggestions, their associations: *home, mother, Christmas, Thanksgiving, baseball, the flag, heirloom, Alma Mater*. Some words are "refined," others are "vulgar"—in the phrase of one writer, "They wear their hats in the parlor." Some years ago persons of refinement avoided the word *sweat*, preferring instead to say *perspiration*. Today the rôles of those two words are very nearly reversed. Anyone who stops to consider this point will think of dozens of instances of words with which the suggestions, the associations, are more potent than their plain meaning.

Two Elements in Connotation—Past Use.—If we consider further this matter of the implications of our words—their suggestions—we find that there are at least two distinct elements in connotation. Neither of them can be disregarded if we seek full command of language.

First there are the suggestions that come from the way the word has been used in the past. Knowledge of these older associations comes from familiarity with literature. All educated persons agree that when we use words we must be mindful of their historical suggestions. It is here, in particular, that the dictionaries, Roget's "Thesaurus," and the standard volumes on word-study are of especial aid.

Present Associations.—But in addition, there are the suggestions that come from the way the word is used in colloquial speech today. It may have surprisingly different implications

for people of different social groups. The differences of colloquial usage between American and English speech offer perhaps the most obvious illustration. There are words which have directly opposite suggestions on the two sides of the ocean. An anecdote used to be told of a young Englishman and an American girl, steamer acquaintances, who clashed over the use of two adjectives. Said the English boy impatiently, "Don't you think 'nice' is a nasty word?" Said the American girl in reply: "Do you think 'nasty' is a nice word?"

Colloquial Usage.—Similar differences in the colloquial usage of different social or occupational groups in our own country have received far too little attention. There are words which, though altogether proper in one circle, have for another associations that are ludicrous, inelegant, or seriously offensive. In a large city public library it was found that the reading-room was being used rather too freely as a meeting-place for acquaintances, so that those who wished to read were incommoded. Accordingly, one of the library guards, a pleasant-faced second-generation American, was stationed at the door of the room with instructions to admit only persons who had readers' cards. Some time after the librarian noticed, as she passed, that he was saying:

"Let me see your card, sir!" "Let me see your card, lady!" and she suggested that he should rather say, "Let me see your card, madam!"

"Oh," the guard protested: "I couldn't say that."

"Why, that is the regular form," said the librarian.

"No, I'd—I'd have to give up my job."

The librarian was puzzled but said merely, "Very well, just say, 'Please let me see your card,' " and passed on.

A few minutes later the guard came into the librarian's office, greatly troubled and blushing furiously. "Miss White," he said, "I didn't want to be impertinent, but I don't believe you know what that word means. I could never say that to a respectable woman!"

To the guard and his circle "madam" meant one thing only, the keeper of a disorderly house.

Need of Considering Colloquial Values.—The shadings and suggestions of colloquial speech are endlessly various, and rich in social significance when you study them seriously. When the trolley conductor or ticket seller addresses you as "Cap" or "Chief," he has no thought of impertinence; he is using what to him is the term of informal respect. In the London English of Dickens' time the equivalent term was "G'uv'ner"; in the America of fifty years back it was "Boss." So, when a man in the smoking-car says: "Give me a match, feller," or a department store saleswoman says: "It looks swell, dearie," there is no intention of undue familiarity; they are using what to their circle are terms of civil address to strangers.

A queer new term of respect, for example, is "All-rightie," which you hear nowadays from a good many secretaries and private telephone operators in city business houses. The standard practice term of acceptance of a message or other agreement is, of course, "All right," but when the girl wishes to be cordial or extra-courteous she says instead, "All-rightie." It springs from the desire to be affable, displayed in the use of a questionable device, rather than in reliance upon *intonation* for expression.

The word-study books mentioned above—in their chapters on local words, word degeneration and elevation, and tropes—will open up the interesting and never-ending variety of colloquial usage. When you once begin noticing it for yourself and experimenting, you are well launched toward command of colloquial speech.

The Question of Slang.—There is always the question of how far to go in one's own use of such colloquial terms. And this brings us to the question of slang, that stock of words of the moment, words which are in the air, which all of us know and most of us employ somewhat in common talk, but which are not in the dictionary, not at least with the meanings that are current.

We call these terms slang. Year by year a few of them prove so useful that they graduate into respectable society, so to speak, and after a while appear in the dictionary as regular words; but the overwhelming majority are displaced in a few years by newer coinage and forgotten.

The Affirmative Case.—Some good souls tell you to avoid every slang term as you do the devil from whom it comes. That is foolish. There are slang terms in every age which have an expressiveness all their own. Slang does not usually come from the devil, but from people of active mind and strong fancy, engaged in eager informal talk. Every now and then someone finds the regular stock of language signals insufficient for his immediate purposes. On the spur of the moment he puts some of the language elements together according to a new formula, nearly always with a tang of humor, and flashes out a new slang expression. In one sense, our American fondness for slang is an evidence of originality, of quickness of mind. We do not like to say the same thing over and over in just the same terms. When we tell a story, for instance, we are apt to vary the form a little with every repetition. In the same way we like to find new ways of expressing familiar ideas. You would be decidedly handicapped if you were to attempt to forbid yourself all use of this vocabulary of the hour, on occasions when it actually aids expressiveness.

A study of slang that is both amusing and instructive is given in a lively novel by Harry Leon Wilson, "Professor How Could You!"²³ An eccentric and guileless elderly professor who breaks loose for a time from his campus moorings, relates his surprising adventures on the seamy side of life. He introduces the weird slang expressions of his rough associates, but takes pains to make them *parse*! The device is carried out very cleverly, and it strikingly reveals the wide divergence between the free and easy colloquial phrasing of the road and standard English.

²³ Harry Leon Wilson, *Professor How Could You!*, Grosset & Dunlap.

The Negative Case.—One grave objection to slang is that you cannot be sure that the slang term will convey your exact thought. If the listener does not know the fashion of the moment, he misunderstands you. Further, reliance upon slang is apt to stunt your command of real words. While the use of a slang term is sometimes evidence of clever humorousness or fancy, too often it is merely mental laziness. When you employ one of these terms of current fashion indiscriminately on all sorts of occasions, you are not gaining suggestive power, but merely using a “filler.”

A few years ago there grew up a fashion of using the word “fine,” uttered with eager impulsiveness to express enthusiastic approval. The suggestion, largely from the manner of utterance, was that the speaker was so moved by his emotion that the ordinary resources of language failed him and he could only ejaculate that superlative “Fine!” But today, because of incessant and unthinking use, “Fine!” has been degraded to a mere handy “filler,” a perfunctory indication of vague satisfaction. Suppose an acquaintance meets you on the street and asks how you are getting along. Do you say “fine”?

Do Not “Think” in Slang.—Reliance upon such “token-words” suggests to your listener that you are not really trying to make your meaning plain, or that you are not careful in your thinking. Thus it hurts your credit in the same way as indistinct utterance, slouchy position, or slovenly dress. A safe rule would be: Use a slang term now and then when it means just what you want to say, as you would use any other word, but do not *think* in slang. Do not use slang when there are accepted words, good English words, equally strong and terse and familiar, which will carry your meaning.

Importance of Word-Suggestion.—This matter of the suggestions of words deserves a much larger place in the study of language. At an early age children should be led to observe the differing connotations of words current among people of different occupations or social groups. But here again we must

remember that childhood training cannot equip one fully for the requirements of adult life. In carefree and immature youth we do not and cannot notice the finer points of relationship which the responsibilities of adult life bring to attention. You have to study this matter of word suggestion for yourself, to pay attention when talking to the effects which particular words produce on others—and on yourself. In time you will develop the automatic sensitiveness of the diplomat, the personnel adviser, the family physician, the trust officer. Reading current literature—not merely the books and magazines of first quality but also, to some degree, the “popular” reading matter patronized by the people who are *not* well educated—will help in the sensitizing process.

We cannot allow ourselves to forget that the suggestive power of words is an emotional rather than an intellectual matter. Now our emotional experiences are chiefly associated with the words of the basic stock which are employed in our intimate personal life. Poetry, strong advertising copy, strong appeal of any sort, which seeks to arouse in the reader a response which is immediate and agreeable, is generally couched in these same familiar words. Study of word-suggestion comes back, finally, to closer study of the possibilities of the basic vocabulary.

The Power of Simple Words.—In public address, it should be said, the principles of selection of words—as regards basic stock, reserve stock and suggestiveness—are somewhat nearer to those of writing than in the case of conversation. We may use more long words, words of Latin derivation, when addressing an audience than in conversation. And the suggestive effects in public speech must be less colloquial. Because public speech always implies an effort at deliberate, intentional presentation, we expect the speaker to dress up a little—at least, not to come in his garage outfit. Yet even for public address the words must be prevailingly simple and plain. They may be highly figurative, if the figure is such as might flash into the mind in strong excitement,

but they will give no suggestion of bookishness or affectation. For good speech must have always the ring of spontaneity.

And certainly with respect to conversation it is true that in the United States the words of speech must be plain and simple, or the conversation seems artificial. We have here a "convention," a national custom, of colloquiality. Europeans, South Americans, Asiatics have not. Even the English and Scotch have less of it than we have. We may regret the extreme colloquiality of American speech, but we cannot change it. In America, accordingly, we are compelled to obtain our effects of accuracy and suggestiveness in terms of the national colloquial mode. We have to learn to make our conversation colloquial without being vulgar or commonplace. It can be done. And the result, when achieved, is a manner of speech which is very fine—entirely simple, yet in a high degree expressive and graceful.

Not Words Only, but Phrases

The third general principle to be borne in mind, during our lifelong pleasant observation of words, is this: What chiefly counts in conveying your full meaning, in talk as in writing, is not the individual word but the *phrase*. Besides the fully stabilized and permanent sound-groups, the words, there are in any language—in English particularly—a great many little combinations of words which are virtually thought units. In many, or most instances, it is these groups of words which the ear picks up, rather than single words. Getting the phrases right is the most important and probably the most baffling matter in the mastery of words.

In many cases two or more words, though each has still a vigorous life of its own, are so generally used together that the occurrence of one automatically suggests the other. "Watchful waiting," "the strenuous life," "meeting of minds," "corned beef and cabbage"—anyone can think of dozens equally familiar in connection with public life, business life, or social life. In "The

Standard of American Speech,"²⁴ a meaty little volume of essays, Professor Fred Newton Scott of the University of Michigan comments very suggestively upon a number of our familiar phrases and traces some of the sources of their impressiveness.

Roosevelt—Lincoln—Dr. Johnson and Others.—Roosevelt had a gift for coining phrases. So in a different way had Grover Cleveland. So had Lincoln—the Gettysburg Address is full of them—"Fourscore and seven years ago," "Of the people, by the people, for the people" and so on. Study of these "word-groups" is highly profitable. You will find it interesting to devise modes of combining the basic words—that is what Lincoln did. You will find it interesting, also, to try to combine basic words with reserve words in phrases which will have partial novelty together with substantial familiarity and homeliness. It was this that Dr. Johnson meant when he wrote of the author of the "Spectator":

Whoever wishes to attain an English style, familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious, must give his days and nights to the volumes of Addison.

Johnson was thinking of style in writing. But his own talk, as reported in Boswell's "Life"²⁵—that most interesting of all biographies to the student of language—is full of phrases which show this combination of the two types of words.

Beware of the Hackneyed Phrase—the "Bromide."—But there are dangers in the use of phrases. A point always to watch is that of avoiding word-groups that have become hackneyed. Every now and then someone in speech or writing happens to put two or three words together in a new thought unit which catches public attention. The new phrase suffers the fate of all popular favorites. Everybody uses it, on all sorts of occasions, until after awhile it becomes a public nuisance.

²⁴ Fred Newton Scott, *The Standard Of American Speech*, Allyn and Bacon.

²⁵ James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson*.

Some years ago Gelett Burgess contributed to the language the term "bromide" to describe such expressions—phrases and short sentences which had been run to death, and Bert Leston Taylor—"B. L. T."—who ran the best of all newspaper "Columns," the "Line O'Type" in the *Chicago Tribune*—began printing a list of such phrases which he said very properly ought to be sent to the "cannery." Charles G. Ross, in an excellent book on "The Writing of News,"²⁶ lists over three hundred terms of this kind which the sensible man should avoid. Here is a portion of that list:

angry mob	late lamented
arch culprit	made good his escape
beautiful and accomplished	natty suit
better half	nick of time
beyond peradventure of a doubt	nipped in the bud
bolt from a clear sky	one fine day
carnival of crime	pillar of the church
checkered career	prepossessing appearance
conspicuous by his absence	put in an appearance
crisp ten-dollar bill	rash act
day of reckoning	ripe old age
divine passion	rooted to the spot
downy couch	shook like a leaf
eked out a bare existence	snug income
evening repast	stood aghast
fair sex	sustained an injury
festive occasion	tidy sum
for it was none other than he	tiny tots
fragrant Havana	tonsorial parlor
goes without saying	to the bitter end
great beyond	under cover of the darkness
hairbreadth escape	vale of tears
host of friends	waxed eloquent
hungry flames	wee sma' hours
immaculate linen	white as a sheet

These "bromides," you observe, are not slang. Some of them at least are perfectly good English. They have become vulgar

²⁶ Charles G. Ross, *The Writing of News*, Henry Holt & Co.

merely because they have been used too much. But their effect is like that of slang, in that they have come to be merely counters, "token-language," substitutes for thought.

Constant Vigilance.—Now the stock-phrase habit is not confined to the illiterate or flippant. Many excellent persons who religiously avoid slang use the stock-phrase constantly. Instead of clothing an idea in words that fit, however unpretentious, they are content to throw round its shoulders some verbal "hand-me-down," some bit of this tattered finery which comes to their lips at the moment as it might to those of a million other people. Beware of the hackneyed phrase, as you beware of cheap jewelry.

And remember that you must be always vigilant. The number of such expressions is continually growing. Year by year more words and phrases are seized on and run to death by current fashion.

How serious this danger is we often fail to realize. Walk through a commuter train some morning—or evening—and note the scraps of talk that meet your ears. Group after group, you will find, are talking about the same topics—the market; the big sport event of the day; their radios; their gardens; their cars and their latest drives; last night's doings at club or lodge. And most of the groups will express the same ideas in the same phrases. Each one has picked up certain phrases from his day's talk with other men—or to some slight extent from the newspaper—and is passing along these token-money expressions.

The Danger of Imitation.—Years ago in a college class in writing, two of the group had a facility of rather shallow thinking on whatever subject came up, and expressed these little thoughts in current phrases—not slang, just hackneyed phrases. Their writing was much more fluent than that of the other boys and made some of them envious. The professor, however, wise in knowledge both of literature and of human nature, pointed out plainly and sternly the error of these facile youths. Where the other lads—when they had an idea to express—struggled to shape

new clothes for it, these two boys sent their thought forth in "standardized phrases." Their compositions were mere patchwork of current expressions. One of the two youngsters later gained quite a success as a newspaper reporter—a correspondent. His ordinary talk, in fact, was "copy." It was simply the common thought of the day and satisfied the easy requirements of ordinary people who sought only a quick and superficial statement. But neither of these young men was personally interesting or stimulating. William J. Bryan's speeches had much of this character; they were satisfactory enough until one tried to see what their significance was. Carlyle says somewhere of a certain French hack-writer of this sort in the late seventeenth century, that "he flowed on, a mighty tide of ditch water."

The Strength of Sincerity.—Better clumsy speech, with vitality, than a smooth flow of commonplaces. A crude, uncultivated man who gets his words, like his thoughts, out of his own mind, almost always talks better—and writes better when he can transfer his thoughts to paper at all—than the person of greater scholastic attainment who writes or talks easily because he uses stock phrases. Look up and read again John Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress."

To clothe your thought in phrases that are readily intelligible, made up of familiar words combined in stable compounds, is right. But "roll your own," always. To build your statements in any considerable degree out of the phrases which are the current and hackneyed fashion is almost precisely like talking in slang. Roosevelt's talk, Lincoln's, Schwab's, Dr. Cadman's, is *like* that of the common man but the word blocks, the phrases, are fresh. Such talk has the plainness of true art, "simplicity of line."

Moderation and Good Taste.—Even with good phrases there is danger. Speech which is filled with phrases is like cream, too thick to drink. It is manifestly the result either of meditation, or fancy, or of very active swift thought. In either case, it is un-

suitable for ordinary talk to ordinary persons. If it seems to imply meditation, the listener in his ordinary mood resents it, because *he* is not meditating but just going about his business, employing only enough signals to carry the needed meaning, and if you appear to be studying over your remarks, or to have prepared them beforehand, he thinks that you have taken advantage of him and is uneasy. If it seems to him that you are thinking faster and more deeply than he, although obviously without having "prepared," he is uneasy because he feels you to be smarter than he is. Good conversational speech has phrases numerous enough to be impressive, to catch attention often and strongly, but few enough to avoid the appearance of being premeditated, or of being too fanciful or too intense for the occasion.

Command of Words a Lifelong Pursuit.—Problems of the mastery of words do not bother children or unschooled persons; such people use words automatically, and—within their limitations of thought—probably more effectively than older and more thoughtful persons who have more to say. But they certainly bother the readers of this book. Real command of words is a power that grows very slowly. We have to watch, listen, read and "inwardly digest," to borrow one of Shakespeare's phrases. Command of dictionary meanings is only the first step and even that calls for continued attention for years. Command of the suggestions of words, and skill in building phrases that carry just the meaning we wish to convey without seeming anywise unnatural, or queer—for these, each of us has to keep working all his life long.

But steady effort very soon begins to show results. And to be able to build your thought, whatever you wish to say, in just the words that suit it, is one of the greatest satisfactions known to man.

CHAPTER XXXII

GROUPING WORDS

Ideas Conveyed by Words in Combination.—Words and phrases represent merely fragments of thought; it is only through their grouping in clauses and sentences that they convey ideas. With respect to writing, all know the importance of the way in which the words are built together—what we call their COMPOSITION. In the sign at railroad crossings: "Traveler! Danger! Stop! Look! and Listen!", the only word which is intrinsically striking is "Danger." It is the composition, the bald, jerky, commanding pattern that catches attention. Suppose the sign read: "The Traveler, to avoid danger, should stop, look about him, and listen." You can double the force of your thought by skill in arranging the words that carry it, or you can kill a good thought by an arrangement that is clumsy or odd. According as the pattern is simple or intricate, smooth and even-textured or abrupt and full of surprises, it tends to put the reader into a certain mood. Further, it reveals the dominant mood of the writer, as well as his training and general character.

Now in speech, as well as in writing, the consequences of using a misguided or clumsy pattern instead of one that is logical and tactful may be very serious. But we are apt to forget this. Whereas in our writing we always pay attention to problems of composition, in our speech we very rarely give them conscious consideration. Such books as treat the subject at all deal with composition as related to public speaking. There is little in print on the patterns of conversation. Why is this?

In Writing, Conscious Grouping.—Well, in writing we always remain conscious that we are making an effort. We cannot forget that our meaning must be conveyed wholly by means

of the written signals, without help from voice and look. Further, we cannot forget that writing is a record, that it must be able to stand scrutiny and rereading. This is not only true of all business writing—contracts and all legal papers, correspondence, reports, and instructions; in the last analysis it is true also of all literary writing. Obviously, therefore, when we write the matter of arrangement of the words constantly challenges our attention.

In Most Speech, Automatic Grouping.—On the other hand, speech is close and intimate, and so far as conversation is concerned, very informal. Most of the time the words of speech arrange themselves automatically, either according to habit, which means usually the traditional custom of those among whom we live, or else according to blind impulse. We have difficulty in realizing the patterns of our own remarks. Our attention is centered upon their substance or meaning and we hardly ever think of planning their detail arrangement. Our conversational “speeches”—by “speech” here is meant the series of sentences uttered without interruption from another person—are generally so brief that it does not often occur to us that the patterns really matter. We recognize, it is true, the skill involved in building the clever dialogue of novels and plays. We realize in part the significance of arrangement on some exceptional occasion in our own experience, in some important interview when, as we say, “Every word counts”—when, in reality, the pattern of a statement manifestly affects its reception. But we do not, generally, have any conscious technique to apply at such a time; even then our grouping is a matter of impulse. When we attempt deliberate arrangement of our conversational sentences we rarely do more than imitate the patterns of writing, or of public speaking. But the result of that method is stilted and unreal.

For the arrangement-patterns of speech, both in conversation and public address, are radically different from those of writing, because the two modes of presentation of thought differ radically

in method and *perspective*. In measure, also, the method and perspective of conversation are recognizably different from those of public speaking.

Speech and Writing

It must be said at the outset that in one sense the technique of grouping words in speech is something which you will have to develop for yourself. There are practically no books available for ready study, none that go further than general principles or very fragmentary suggestions. In every age and every social group, undoubtedly, there have been individuals who have acquired a high degree of skill, but generally theirs was a purely personal technique applying to their special situations. No one has thus far contrived to put this wisdom of the ages into objective terms.

You will, however, find some aid in books on public speaking, in those on rhetoric, in those on salesmanship, advertising copy and personnel. After you have learned what to look for you will find a great deal in disjointed bits and fragments in biographies of men who have been successful in dealing with others. Mainly, however, you have to study it out for yourself through listening and by experimenting. Such observation can be greatly enriched, it is true, by studying the imaginary talk given in plays—and to a less degree in novels and stories.

But much may be done to expedite your progress through clearing away certain misconceptions; through getting a broad view of some essential differences between speech and writing and of the principles of grouping as they apply to all use of language and particularly to speech. Then you will have a basis on which your own common sense and taste can safely operate.

The significant points of difference between writing and speech, with respect to the grouping of words, are these: In the first place writing can be grasped in larger and more complex units than is possible with speech. In the second place these

writing units, however large and complex, can be retained in the mind of a reader far more definitely than the simpler speech units can be retained in the mind of a listener.

The Task of Eye and the Task of Ear.—Our eyes, as they glance down a page of print or writing, pick up the words in large groups—a line or more at a time. We perceive at a glance and almost unconsciously certain larger features of the grouping—the length and the general *hang* of the paragraphs on a page; the general pattern of two facing pages in a book or magazine. We note also, with little conscious effort, certain points about the relationships of the thought as well as many points of form—the spelling, the grammar, and something of the logical tie-up of sections. Speech, on the other hand, addressed to the ear, is picked up in much smaller bits. It comes to the ear, actually, a succession of sounds, a word or phrase at a time. It is focused by our mind in single statements, or questions, or suggestions.

What the Ear Picks Up—Waves of Words.—In fact, while in writing the all-important matter is the construction of sentences, each with definite subject and predicate, in speech, although care for sentence structure is important, it is not all-important. Our ears pick up not sentences but rather *waves of words* which might or might not, if written down, take the form of complete sentences. Relationships between statements are divined perhaps more largely through the speaker's intonation and manner and through his pauses, than through recognized features of the grammatical structure. This one fact is sufficient to show why it is that when we try to test our speech patterns by the way they look when written down, we nearly always go wrong.

For Speech, Looser Texture and Simple Patterns.—But there is another reason. When we read we can turn back at any point to scrutinize what has been said, and we do this constantly when the matter is of importance. Thus we retain in mind those larger features of structure which the wider grasp

of the eyes enables us to perceive. An arrangement which is intricate or lengthy, if it piques our attention, may be actually more potent. When we listen, however, most of the words and many, if not most of the statements, pass out of mind almost at once. Except for a few striking expressions which linger in memory, we usually forget the wording and the pattern of what was said three statements back. The patterns of good speech, therefore, are bound to be less firm and elaborate than those of good writing. Otherwise our powers of comprehension are overtaxed.

Improving Speech Grouping Practicable.—Since the point of view thus involved in consciously grouping words for speech is different from the one acquired at school in the study of written composition, the first approach to composition in speech may be perplexing. The chief difficulty arises from the fact that speech must be built at the moment. While the writer, like the reader, can try again, the speaker cannot. Good writing is largely a matter of revision, of correcting and improving sentences and paragraphs before you let them go. But with speech, revision is impossible. Any devices for building good sentences in talk must be such as can be used at the moment of speaking. Nevertheless, when once the right point of view is taken, progress in effective grouping of words in speech can be rapid. For speech is a more spontaneous activity than writing. When you have got clearly in mind the right aim in building speech groups the words will soon begin to flow together properly. And finally, improvement in this point of speech technique depends to a very large degree upon clear and ready *thinking*. As compared with improvement in the use of words, for instance, it does not have to wait nearly so long upon the slow formation of habits.

Two Principles of Grouping—Custom versus Display

Students of language long ago pointed out that the arrangement of words, both in speech and in writing, is governed by two contradictory principles, held in balance. One is the principle

of CUSTOM; the other is the principle of originality, of effort for striking effects, what the advertising copy man calls DISPLAY. They are explained with remarkable clearness in a keen and suggestive book on "English Composition," published a generation ago, by Professor Barrett Wendell of Harvard.¹ This well-known book on writing you will find decidedly worth examination; what it says about writing throws light, by contrast, on the processes of speech.

If we were the first persons to employ our code of words we should arrange them according to the principle of display, that is, according to the notion we had at the time of the order that would get the most attention, or seem most agreeable to the ear. We should begin a remark with the word we wanted the other man to think of *first*, follow with what we wanted him to think of *next*, and so on. A baby's early remarks generally run like that. Professor Jespersen gives these instances in the volume already cited:

A Danish child of two years said the Danish words (imperfectly pronounced, of course) corresponding to "Oh papa lamp mother boom," when his mother had struck his father's lamp with a bang. Another child said: "Papa hen corn cap" when he saw his father give corn to the hens out of his cap.²

Once in a while an adult's sentence follows the same order; "Traveler! Danger!," etc., is an example.

But our word-code has been used by countless generations, and in the course of the centuries there have grown up a multitude of customs regarding the patterns of arranging words. Unless we follow these customary patterns our communication seems to the other person queer; it is not readily understood and it is not *liked*. Effective arrangement of words in either writing or speech means applying the principle of display in accordance with the rules of the game, that is, in accordance with custom.

¹ Barrett Wendell, *English Composition*, Charles Scribner's Sons.

² Otto Jespersen, *Language: Its Nature, Development and Origin*, Henry Holt & Co.

The Power of Custom.—And the most important point about the grouping of words in speech is the extreme degree to which it is governed by various aspects of custom. With writing there is always that second chance for getting a reader's attention. If you even "catch the skirt of his coat-tails," perhaps by some trivial feature of wording or of layout on the page, he may be prompted to look again at the passage and in the end find your arrangement impressive. But with speech, variation from the usual form may be fatal to your purpose; if the arrangement sounds in any way queer the listener may be repelled, or rendered suspicious, so that he will not give full attention.

The difficulty with the effort to improve grouping in speech lies in determining what aspects of custom need most attention, and where we may take liberties with it and apply our own individual taste in arranging words. In this matter also, systematic use of standard works of reference is practically indispensable. Most of those listed in Chapter XXXI are equally helpful here. Others will be mentioned in the following pages.

The Principles of Grammar

Now there are certain principles of arranging words which are recognized, definitely codified, and taught in schools as the rules of grammar. The rules of grammar are considered, broadly, as representing the way in which the language has been used in speech and writing by those who are regarded as most successful in handling it. Those who desire to use English correctly are expected to observe these rules. They include two basic general principles and a great number of detail rules mostly deduced from one of these general principles.

The Principle of Normal Word-Order.—The first and chief of the general principles is that of the **NORMAL ORDER OF WORDS WITHIN A SENTENCE**. For convenience we shall use the term sentence in this discussion, although, as noted already, the primary word-groups of speech are not always sentences.

In English we arrange words in a sentence according to the order of subject—verb—object. For example: *The man built the house*. In Latin and some other languages the normal order might place the verb first, or last. We place an adjective before the noun which it qualifies or describes; we say *a black horse*, not *a horse black*. In French, on the other hand, the normal order is *a horse black*. All English-speaking people, educated or uneducated, observe this rule or custom automatically in their talk. In writing we often deliberately depart from this normal order and “invert” the sentence, to attract attention. That is, we apply the principle of “display.” Such inversion of the normal order in writing, if not too frequent, does not obstruct the meaning since the reader, because of the wider perspective of eye-apprehension, recognizes the purpose of the inversion and understands. But in speech our departures from the normal order of the sentence elements are far more limited. Many persons who try to improve their talk by patterning it according to the rules of writing render their talk ineffective.

The Principle of Agreement.—The other general principle is that of AGREEMENT. Both in speech and in writing it is expected that two words intended to be thought of together will correspond in certain points of their form. In most languages the points of correspondence are those of number, gender, person, case, mode, and tense. Observance of the principle of agreement is general though not universal. In writing it is violated only in minor points and through inadvertence, and the reader recognizes the error at once. In speech also, even ignorant and unschooled persons observe the principle in most points. Dialect speech, though it may violate the secondary rules of grammar, does not usually violate these big principles of the language. It is this fact which renders dialect stories intelligible as well as humorous and entertaining.

In the course of ages, students of language, seeking to analyze and classify the phenomena of language, have deduced and set

down a great number of rules based on these two main principles, particularly that of agreement. Most of them are stipulations as to little points of consistency. The grammarian—and anyone else when he thinks of the matter—is naturally impelled to apply logic to usage, to insist that a word or phrase of a certain type ought to follow the form or usage of others of similar type.

Important Aspects of Agreement.—Professor Mason Long of Pennsylvania State College has briefly listed³ eight principal aspects of agreement in present-day English. These eight aspects, with a few of his examples, are here given:

A modal verb [not an infinitive, participle or gerund] agrees with its subject in number and person.

The men run. Man runs. Thou runnest.

(Verbs are troublesome in the complexity of their usage. Professor Long lists 13 special cases as to which confusion often occurs.)

The demonstrative adjectives, *this* and *that*, are of the same number as the noun they qualify:

This kind of road is good.

These kinds of houses are built of stone.

A pronoun is in the same gender, number and person as its antecedent [the word to which it refers].

I knew Mr. Beams; *he* is a kind man.

The subject and the complements of a modal verb are in the nominative case:

They were members.

Who did *they* say was hurt?

A noun in apposition agrees with the noun with which it is in apposition:

Mr. Heller, he whom we saw, is a good salesman.

The complements of a non-modal verb [infinitive, participle or gerund] are in the objective case.

³ Mason Long, *A College Grammar*, The Ronald Press Company.

I knew it to be *him*.

He imagined the waiter to be *me*.

Transitive modal verbs govern a noun or pronoun in the objective case:

The child *whom* I knew to be my niece approached me.

Give *no* men a chance.

Prepositions govern a noun or pronoun in the objective case:

Give that to brother and *me*.

About *whom* are you speaking?

Society's Attitude Toward the Rules.—Now it will be evident to any reader that while some of these rules of grammar are observed by nearly every one in both writing and speech, others are apt to be ignored, so far as speech is concerned, by all but the careful few. Henry Ward Beecher once remarked, when criticized for disregarding in his talk some such grammatical rule: "Young man, when the English language gets in my way, so much the worse for the English language."

For example, consider what is called "the double negative." In English today the rule is not to say "I haven't seen nobody," as did the Englishman of six centuries ago, or as does the German of today. Instead, we say, "I haven't seen anybody." But only the better educated, more careful portion of the public strictly observes that rule in common talk.

Or take the expressions: "He don't," and "It's me." The following from an editorial in *Liberty* probably represents the attitude of most persons as to the use of these expressions in talk:

Anyone who has studied grammar knows that these expressions are technically incorrect, yet practically everyone uses them, now and then, without thinking.

The famous yarn of Dr. McCosh, Princeton's great president, of whom the sons of Nassau still sing: "We'll never forget McCosh, b'gosh, we'll never forget McCosh," shows that even college presidents may stray. The tale relates that one night Dr. McCosh, attracted by a wild racket in a dormitory, knocked upon a student's door. In response one of the

roisterers called: "Who's there?" "It's me—Dr. McCosh!" thundered the president.

"You're a liar!" shouted one of the students. "If it were Dr. McCosh he would say: 'It is I.'" Whereupon the good doctor retreated.

Time was, before grammarians and dictionary-makers got into the saddle, when people made up their language as they went along. Some of the greatest literature ever written was born in those periods.

It is probable that usage will soon make respectable "He don't" and "It's me," even if it don't (here subjunctive) take "Ain't I" into the family.

It is not likely that Beecher said, "I haven't seen nobody," but it is very likely that now and then he said both "He don't" and "It's me." What should be our own attitude toward these and other rules of grammar, often disregarded in talk? Should we talk as do those with whom we have to deal? Should we undertake always to observe the strict letter of the law? Is there a wise middle course?

Use Common Sense.—Let us bear in mind always that language, as noted in Chapter XXX, is the result of uneven growth through long ages. It is full of complexities and inconsistencies, which are deeply fixed in popular habit. Many of these are recognized by grammarians as points of **IDIOM**—which might be called, perhaps, unexplained custom. For full understanding of these, the works of reference listed in Chapter XXXI are invaluable. It is very likely that in some other points of speech custom the grammarians have been mistaken, have tried to apply maxims of logical consistency on insufficient knowledge, and have made rules that do not fit the facts of the situation. Perhaps as to some of these the grammarians may reverse their position.

But we need not make these minor rules of grammar a bugbear. If certain of the minor rules are generally disregarded by the persons among whom we live—as in such statements: as "It is *me*"; "Everybody will bring *their own umbrella*"; "He *don't*"; it may be better in our talk with them to follow current custom. Nor need we feel shame or guilt in doing so. For language is

merely a code of signals for convenience. It was made for man—and by man—and its inconsistencies are ingrained. Better use it normally, that is to say, as other persons do, not pedantically.

Neither Pedantry nor Slovenliness.—Beware, on the one hand, of following too positively your own private notion of what *ought* to be the custom. Every now and then you meet some positive, odd soul that insists on pronouncing a word according to his private notion of what the pronunciation should be—like the man who said *dévil-ôpe*. Similarly, you meet persons who make a "fetish of some minor grammatical point to which their own attention has been specially drawn. That attitude is foolish.

On the other hand, beware of letting yourself lower your standards to the level of those who are downright ignorant or careless. Consider the attitude of a brilliant young southern lawyer, an honor graduate of a leading college, who entered local politics. One of his college friends, who met him a few years later, was horrified at the incorrectness of his speech and expressed astonishment. "Well," said the lawyer, "good grammar gets no votes down in my district." Later, when he became governor of his state, he resumed the standard English in which he was brought up. The trouble with such a course is that you are likely to be caught. Even uneducated people generally recognize correct grammatical usage, though they may not themselves follow it; and they know what should be expected from a "college graduate." If the college graduate talks just as they do they may shrewdly see through his "game."

A Look at Grammar for Yourself.—The best plan is to take the time to look into the problem of grammar for yourself. Why not supplement your school study of the rules by examining some books that explain the basis of these rules, in logic and in the history of the language? The experience is likely to be very interesting. Incidentally, it will throw much light upon the way people's minds work, your own included.

For a clear statement of the rules as they now are you could find nothing better than the book by Long already mentioned. The wealth of its illustrative passages from both classic and current writing supplies one essential for any careful thinking on the subject, a comprehensive set of typical "cases." "A New English Grammar,"⁴ by M. A. Leiper, and "English Review Grammar,"⁵ by W. K. Smart, are also good.

Then you should turn to the historical grammars to find out for yourself where these rules of today came from, how they developed. Jespersen, besides the book already mentioned, has another on the "Philosophy of Grammar"⁶ which will well repay close and leisurely reading. And by way of preparation for this excursion into grammar you might turn to Professor Krapp's "Knowledge of English," already mentioned in Chapter XXXI, and read his Chapter XVI, "What is Grammar?"

A first-hand examination of these books will go far toward settling any grammar difficulties you may have. You will be much better able to understand and estimate rightly the rules, and to know where, if you choose, you may depart from them.

Colloquial Custom

The case of the young lawyer brings us, however, to the most important and difficult aspect of composition in speech—the treatment of colloquial custom. When we talk—any one of us—we habitually put words together not only according to the rules of grammar, so far as we know them, but in addition according to the patterns which we hear around us in colloquial or unstudied speech. We follow these patterns of colloquial custom almost as automatically as we follow the fundamental principle of idiom.

The Patterns of Intimate Usage.—To take an instance which is very plain, both Americans and English today use in talk the form of statement which is built up with the auxiliary verb

⁴ M. A. Leiper, *A New English Grammar*, The Macmillan Co.

⁵ W. K. Smart, *English Review Grammar*, Crofts.

⁶ Otto Jespersen, *The Philosophy of Grammar*, Henry Holt & Co.

"do," on many occasions when the English of three hundred years ago, as shown in the King James version of the Bible, avoided it.

Thus in Matthew, Chapter VII, the 6th verse, the King James version, following closely the colloquial form of its time, reads:

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

The version issued in 1923 by Professor Goodspeed of the University of Chicago and his associates reads:

Do not give what is sacred to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, or they will trample them under their feet and turn and tear you in pieces.

In Matthew, Chapter XVIII, the second and third verses, the King James version reads:

And behold there came a leper and worshipped him saying, Lord if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

The Goodspeed version reads:

And a leper came up to him and fell on his knees saying, "If you only choose, Sir, you can cure me."

So he stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I do choose! Be cured!"

And his leprosy was immediately cured.

Local Flavor.—Just such little differences in CONSTRUCTIONS, or patterns of words, exist today in the speech of people in different regions, and even in the speech of people in the same region but of different social groups. We *feel* the differences, nearly all of us, even though most of us are unable to say explicitly just what they are. This very subject came up one day among a group of chance acquaintances on a steamer returning from England. Nearly all were college professors in language departments whose talk was exceptionally free from local flavor, either in wording or in accent. Yet a newspaper correspondent who had

traveled widely proceeded to identify several of them, chiefly by their speech patterns, as an American originally from the northern Middle West, a Canadian from Nova Scotia, an Englishman from the northern manufacturing counties, a Scotchman from Edinburgh. The newspaper man could not give full explanation of his guess in every instance, but he spotted a number of little peculiarities and his listeners, when attention was called to these points, were able to recognize them and agree that they were characteristic.

Obeying these patterns of colloquial custom is probably even more essential to entire command of speech in conversation, than is full observance of the rules of grammar. For these colloquial patterns are more influential with most persons than conformity to grammatical rules. They are followed instinctively by the members of the group in which they operate. One from outside that circle, if he follows them, is regarded not as a stranger, an alien, but as one of the circle.

The Custom of the Country.—We sometimes depart from the custom which has been dominant with us, when we move to another region or join a different social group. Often, when a person who has lived in an atmosphere where incorrect speech is the rule moves up in the social or educational scale, he adopts the more fastidious colloquial custom of his new associates. The young lawyer was merely moving *down* in the social scale. Or, when an Englishman moves to the United States, or an Alabaman moves to New York, he may adopt the rhetorical customs of his new locality. It may be said, by the way, that Americans seem rather more ready and able to adapt themselves thus to the language patterns of a strange locality, than are English people. We are perhaps more concerned to avoid attracting special notice as “foreigners.” In the first days of the World War there were many instances of Americans in Germany who easily escaped over the frontier because they were able to pass for Germans. The English who happen to be in Germany seem to have been

less able to disguise their national patterns in their use of the foreign tongue.

We might suppose that this colloquial speech—not recorded in books and operating only through oral tradition—would be chaotic, fluid, lawless. But that would be far from the truth. The rules of custom as to the patterns of colloquial speech are strong, like the social customs in a college dormitory, or among the sailors in the forecastle of a ship. They may have grown up by chance, and may be highly inconsistent, like the rules for the dress of spectators at English cricket games twenty years ago. They may change from time to time. But, like fashions in clothes, while they exist they are absolute.

In Every Way, Observe Colloquial Usage.—The development of a clear, conscious knowledge of these points of colloquial custom, the way people of your *own* region or circle talk and the way those of other circles or regions talk, is a matter of long-continued, first-hand observation. Listen to the individuals round you with this thought in mind. As you go about the country, or as strangers from different regions cross your path, watch for little peculiarities in the way people group words to express similar ideas:—How do they greet a stranger, an acquaintance, an old friend? How do they express courtesies? How do they group their words when irritated or pressed for time, or in earnest, positive assertions? Is it true that southerners are more *polite*? Do they arrange their statements with less abruptness than northerners? Do they allow themselves more words in expressing ordinary conventional remarks? Is it true that Britishers are more careful to express themselves in thought-units that are *complete*, and Americans more apt to talk in a series of fragments? For instance, are the disjointed staccato phrases of Alfred Jingle in Dickens' "Pickwick Papers" more American than English? Is it true that Irish people are readier in giving their statements a humorously graceful turn, whatever they have to say, than are middle western Americans? Are such generali-

zations confirmed by your own personal experience? Can you put your finger on some *specific points* of the grouping which exemplify the generalization?

Such peculiarities of grouping as well as of vocabulary, the special usages of railroad men, hospital internes and nurses, lawyers, vaudeville actors, and other special groups, are noted in *American Speech*,⁷ a magazine edited by Professors Pound of the University of Nebraska, Malone of Johns Hopkins, and Kennedy of Leland Stanford. Significant facts of American colloquial custom are here given month by month in a form that anyone can grasp and enjoy. With most of us, while we recognize such little peculiarities more or less passively, we fail to fix them in mind or organize them. A little systematic attention will prove definitely useful as well as highly entertaining.

Principles of Rhetoric

From what has been said thus far it might seem that composition—patterning—in speech, is an automatic affair, merely following the crowd. What about the opportunity and the desirability of deliberate modification of customary patterns in one's speech, particularly in conversation? Let us admit, first, that not many persons make any consistent attempt to apply individual patterns in their talk, and that with some of those who do the results are not happy. The reason is that they do not know clearly the principles of speech—colloquial speech. Generally such persons attempt to *talk* as they would *write*—they are talking into print.

Nevertheless, there are some who do succeed. Just as you find men and women whose working vocabulary has dignity and expressiveness though without resort to "bookish" or heavy words, so you find those whose sentence patterns, without being anyway unnatural, have individuality, variety and charm. It is because of their skilful use of the principle of display within the

⁷ *American Speech*. The Williams & Wilkins Co.

limitations of grammatical rules and colloquial custom. You find, usually, that these persons have an extra-vivid realization of a situation—of the person they are addressing, so that they pick words and arrange words with special appropriateness. Every one of us does this at times, when specially alert and at his best. How can we help ourselves to do it more of the time?

Three Principles Long Recognized.—Here it is wise to begin by utilizing the experience of other people who have had to employ our old instrument of language to convey their ideas and feelings. Among the various patterns of arrangement accepted as correct grammatically, there are certain which have been found through long experience to be specially suited for the production of particular effects, so that they have come to be followed generally by those who present their thought effectively in speech, as well as in writing. Ages ago people began to note down, formulate and explain these patterns, in books on Rhetoric.

Our object, when we talk, is to convey an idea or impulse by the shortest route, in a form that is as brief and as readily intelligible as may be, in view of the special circumstances of the case. The most frequent dangers or hindrances to success in this aim have been found to be these three: First, the tendency to get off the subject, or to leave a thought in incomplete form; failure to give, in the language of a court, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Efforts to guard against this most common danger have led to the formulation of rules for securing **UNITY**. Second, failure to indicate sufficiently the comparative importance of various items of the thought. Efforts to guard against this have led to rules for adjusting what is called **EMPHASIS**. Third, failure to indicate clearly the relations of item with item. Efforts to guard against this have led to rules for securing **COHERENCE**.

The Principle of Unity.—In compositions of every kind, there must be a certain degree of unity. The parts must be joined together according to a leading idea or principle. Thus a single sentence or word group ought to express one entire thought, not

several different thoughts. Matters which have no real connection cannot be joined by force of language. The principle of unity holds subject and predicate in a sentence to a single point. What does not bear upon that point should be eliminated.

Violations of Unity—Using Too Many Words.—Unity is violated in speech in many ways. Very often we use too many words. Sometimes this fault takes the form of roundabout phrasing, as in a remark addressed by a young American to a waiter in a London boarding house: "You haven't seen a copy of the newspaper around here anywhere this morning, have you?" Or in the inquiry addressed by another young American to the conductor of a suburban train approaching New York: "You don't know anything about where you go to get over to the Baltimore and Ohio Station, do you?"

Sometimes it takes the form of overloading our statements with meaningless expressions like "See," or "Listen," or "Seems to me," "So to speak," "In a sense," which take the edge off our thought. We employ such phrases partly because we are not quite clear as to our own meaning and do not wish to say a thing too positively, partly because we wish to clinch the listener's attention. With many of us these phrases have become habitual; we use them without knowing it.

Needless Repetition.—Worst of all, we repeat ourselves, we state a simple idea twice over or more. The more in earnest we are, the more prone we are to this error. For example, from a conference of business executives considering Management:

Wherein does a boy profit in going into an office to become a second-rate broker's clerk or a third-rate business man, or a sort of a half-way real estate dealer, or something like that where that same man has really intended to be a mechanic, and if he had gone into the shop he might have made a successful foreman or sub-foreman, or at least a highly trained mechanic who could earn as much or more money than he can earn in the profession or vocation he chose, just because the work is cleaner and more comfortable physically?

To say a thing once and leave it is difficult for most of us. Very often simple and uneducated people who think clearly about matters they have to consider, talk better in this respect than those who are better educated, because they just say what they want to say and then stop.

The Principle of Emphasis.—Good talk is so arranged, so hung, as to put the chief light on the main points—it is well “displayed.” This is what is known as the principle of EMPHASIS.

In every group of words conveying a complete idea, or connected series of ideas, no matter how long, there is one focal point which may be termed the core or peak of the passage. The other parts are subsidiary to this; they are trailers.

The core of the passage may come at the beginning, as in :

“It will be worth something to us to acquire the right of way, even if we do not build and operate the line.”

It may come at the middle. We might arrange the same statement in this way :

“If we acquire the right of way, that will be worth something, even if we do not build and operate the line.”

Or the core may come at the end of the statement, as in :

“Even if we do not build and operate the line, to acquire the right of way will be worth something.”

Applying the principle of display to talk, so as to secure proper emphasis, consists largely in making the core stand out clearly, and keeping the trailers unobtrusive in form.

A few methods which are often used are—

I. Expressing the core in words that catch the ear because of their striking sound :

“Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue; but if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines.”

"Of course, the personal equation is most important, and yet when you come to questions of selection the initial step in dealing with questions of human relations, *how can you possibly succeed* unless you know exactly what kind of job is to be filled and what particular qualifications are needed."

2. Leading up to the core by means of climax :

"If I do not go back to the Marshall Company with reliable information, and if you do not give me a story to back up our work here, some proof that this thing is an asset to that company, you *will not receive the \$100 fee for membership from the Marshall Company next year.*"

3. Antithesis :

"Our country is not suffering from its inability to *raise food-stuffs*; it is suffering from its inability to *distribute them.*"

There can be no short and summary rules for using these devices for directing attention. You learn only through study, experience, through watching yourself, listening to others, reading attentively. Gradually you develop a sense for effective display of the thought, so that even in eager talk you arrange the parts of your sentences, almost automatically, in an order which throws attention on the points which deserve it.

The Principle of Coherence.—One very obvious fault of spontaneous common talk is that of failure to indicate sufficiently the relation between items of a statement or group of statements. We rely too much on utterance and voice and we fail to tie together the successive ideas in a form which is easy for the listener to follow.

Too Many "And's" and "But's."—We tie together our long sentences by a clumsy succession of *and's* and *but's*. Children do this constantly; uneducated people do it; nearly all of us revert to the practice when we become excited. In a meeting of professors of economics and business administration, discussing the

development of university bureaus of research, the secretary of a leading trade association, a man of intelligence and culture, said this :

“Since going into business, I have followed the lines of the organization secretary since 1911, and I have found that there are more things that the business men want to know than they are able to tell about. They are looking for somebody to lead them, and they will hire some secretary and pay him a very large salary and give him one poor stenographer and a broken down typewriter and expect him to do wonders, and the reason for that is that they are looking for someone who can lead and they will look out for the detail work.”

Parentheses.—In connected talk we interrupt our thought with long parentheses. For example :

“That is why our organization requested—we have not always been able to be represented at these gatherings, although we should have liked to do so ; it was a matter of regret—but we desired to have some part assigned us in connection with the work of gathering the data.”

What the man wanted to say was something like this :

“To our regret our organization has not always been able to be represented at these gatherings. We requested, however, that we might be assigned some part of the work of gathering the data.”

But he did not have his thought clearly enough in mind to go straight to the point. This fault occurs often in conversation which is entirely careless. It appears still oftener when people who are generally careless are trying to be careful. They are unable to control themselves.

Heaviness.—In avoiding carelessness no one wants to fall into heaviness and pedantry. Very much of our talk can be only partially spontaneous ; it is in part consciously planned. That is true of business talk in important interviews and in dictating letters. In all public speaking, even the most informal, there is some planning of successive statements. Talk of this kind is prone to errors

which grow out of our education itself. When trying to speak carefully we more or less consciously imitate written sentences and the result is we "talk like a book." In writing, long sentences are often necessary. The relations of the various parts of the thought must be indicated entirely by devices of arrangement, and that often involves elaborate patterns. But in talk, as the relations of the thought are indicated largely by the delivery, the words need carry only the substance, the successive units of the thought arranged in simple patterns. In talk, therefore, the better manner is to speak in short sentences, each of them presenting in simple terms a single facet of the idea. That is the normal form for talk, and a great aid to directness.

There is a certain New York physician who gets his results largely through the active cooperation he secures from his patients. He has to give them full and clear understanding of what they are to do, and why. He has developed the habit of expressing his thoughts almost entirely in short sentences, averaging not over ten or twelve words each. His talk is striking in its clearness; each item is complete, coming just after the listener's mind has picked up the preceding item and building out the thought with another brief and definite section. Persons who have to give directions to others very often develop similar power of analyzing a situation and framing their remarks in short, easy sentences that follow in careful logical sequence.

There is, of course, the risk that a succession of short remarks will give an impression of jerkiness, what in music is called a *staccato* effect. That need not be the case, however, if the items are properly selected so that one idea leads logically to the next. Time may be saved through omitting most of the connective words that we are apt to insert at the end or the beginning of a clause to tie together ideas whose logical relationship is not close.

Stepping-Stones.—In writing, the method is to put down definitely everything that is to be conveyed. The writer seeks to construct a solid roadway for his reader's mind. In the effort to

make a series of statements accurate, particularly if the matter calls for close intellectual discrimination, the style of writing often becomes extremely elaborate and heavy. This fault is common in legal documents. It is found, unfortunately, in many other books. But in talk the mind progresses by leaps. The listener is given a series of stepping-stones. Each stone must be solid and must be located at the proper point for the next leap, but it does not need to be closely connected with the last thing said. If all the tiny connections are put in, the talk seems unnatural. It sounds like a monologue, or a prepared speech.

The field agent of a certain philanthropic institution was a man of unusual shrewdness and mental acumen. Yet he made a very bad impression on a stranger because he talked like a book. He seemed to be fearfully long-winded, simply because he put in all the connectives, all the minor "trailers" of his sentences which most of us omit in talk. The man talked, that is, just as he wrote. His letters read easily enough, but the same things in spoken words sounded unnatural.

First-Hand Study of the Art of Rhetoric.—With respect to the principles of Rhetoric, as with respect to Grammar, you will find it eminently worth your while to look into the matter for yourself by examining some of the books that give a broad and reliable discussion. In the course of the ages there have been many thoughtful and wise books on Rhetoric, some of which have strongly affected civilization, some of which you are likely to find of engrossing interest in the orderly investigation of the nature and ways of speech. An excellent book to begin with is "The Art of Writing," by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, the English novelist.⁸ He is a very human man and this series of lectures delivered at the University of Oxford retains the liveliness and ease of his stories. Perhaps the best single book in English is "Working Principles of Rhetoric,"⁹ by John F. Genung, who was a professor in Amherst College some years ago. Into this

⁸ Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, *The Art of Writing*, G. P. Putnam's Sons.

⁹ John F. Genung, *The Working Principles of Rhetoric*, Ginn & Co.

book he put very nearly all that had been worked out by writers and scholars for many centuries. Any man who will read through this book at a leisurely pace, taking time to enjoy the acute thought, the kindly humor, the homely sagacity of his remarks, noting the numberless little extracts from writers and speakers of every age, and noting also Professor Genung's pithy comments, will arrive at a good comprehension of the nature of the "art of putting things." It will give you a basis for determining what you can yourself do toward giving your own expression of ideas in speech something of the attractiveness and the vitality which these extracts illustrate.

Finally, if you would like to get some realization of what an old art it is, how it appeared to men who ages ago reached a mastery which has never been surpassed, get a little volume by Professor Charles Sears Baldwin of Columbia University, "Ancient Rhetoric and Poetic."¹⁰ In Part I you will find a brief presentation of the book on rhetoric written by the Greek Aristotle, which has influenced the thinking of the civilized world for two thousand years.

Individual Patterns.—Within the prescriptions of grammatical custom, and of the principles of rhetoric, there are endless possibilities of modifying the patterns to produce a particular effect—of terseness, of liveliness, of leisureliness, of abrupt command, of request. It has to be done by little touches. If you overdo it, your speech will appear artificial. But the experimentation is well worth while. Observing the stipulations of custom after a while becomes easy—second nature. Thereafter you have your mind free from experiment with some of the "inside play." At this point the matter of composition, patterning, in speech, becomes keenly interesting.

On a train from New York to Philadelphia, not long ago, the train boy with raucous voice and meaningless, unintelligible cries was replaced by a middle-sized waiter from the dining-car. His

¹⁰ Charles Sears Baldwin, *Ancient Rhetoric And Poetic*, The Macmillan Co.

voice was pleasing, his manner quietly dignified, and this is what he said: "Candy, five and ten cents a package. Chewing-gum, made by Mr. Wrigley, and it's five cents a package. Peanut bars, fresh and crisp, and *they're* five cents. Five and ten! Five and ten!"

The Danger of Fluency.—In such deliberate patterning of conversational speech two general cautions need to be borne in mind.

On the one hand, too great fluency is a handicap. If words are poured out too freely, while the statements may "make sense" and be correct enough in construction, they may be actually incoherent, because loaded down with unnecessary items. In hasty, eager speech, the speaker often overruns himself. He fails to mould his thoughts so as to be intelligible to the different mental procedure of his listener. As a result, the listener may be confused. Or he may be irritated at the speaker for not taking the trouble to sift his thoughts. Or he may be contemptuous, feeling that the speaker is not in full command of his faculties. In any case he is likely not to be willing to yield his confidence to the speaker's judgment.

The Danger of Over-Compression.—On the other hand, there is danger in too great compression. If the speaker, like the learned man, the "clerk" in Chaucer's "Prologue," speaks "not one word more than is necessary," his style exacts from the listener a degree of close attention which is unnatural, except for short periods. Moreover, while such a style is impressive to the ordinary listener, it seems *queer* if largely used, because it implies a degree of absorption in the subject that he does not share.

One of the outstanding figures of the age of Shakespeare was Francis Bacon, lawyer, scientist and writer. His "Essays" are filled with acute thinking, wit, and shrewd practical sense, but they are hard to read because the thought is packed too tight. For example, in his Essay on "Youth and Age":

Young men, in the conduct and manage of actions, embrace more than they can hold; stir more than they can quiet; fly to the end, without consideration of the means and degrees; pursue some few principles, which they have chanced upon, absurdly; care not to innovate, which draws unknown inconveniences; use extreme remedies at first; and, that which doubleth all errors, will not acknowledge or retract them, like an unready horse, that will neither stop nor turn.

When we read this passage we can get the meaning if we read slowly, and scrutinize every word, and reread. If anyone were to talk thus to us, in conversation, few of us would get much out of the passage.

Bacon was also a most impressive public speaker. But here also he made too great demand upon his hearers' attention. Ben Jonson said of him: "No man ever spoke more neatly, more prestly, more weightily, or suffered less emptiness, less idleness in what he uttered. His hearers could not cough or look aside from him without loss." The comment carries both praise and condemnation. People admired Bacon deeply, but his thought was packed too close for listeners to grasp it. The same was true of Emerson, whose "Essays" are impressive when read, but must have been most difficult to follow when spoken. Such excessive compression is another phase of soliloquizing. A moderate degree of looseness and apparent carelessness in arrangement would seem essential if you wish to have people easy in their conversation with you.

Thinking Ahead as You Talk.—As an aid in getting rid of pure automatism in patterning your statements—merely following traditional custom and unchecked impulse—two practical suggestions may be offered. First, ineffective patterning can be greatly lessened through the habit of putting one's thoughts into definite words *just before we speak them*. We do that when we are sufficiently roused. Everyone has had the experience now and then of looking ahead as he talks, seeing his road clear before him and speaking with simplicity and directness. Most of the

time, however, we are a little sluggish, lazy or abstracted; perhaps while saying one thing our minds are vaguely concerned with what we are going to say much further on, so that we are scarcely aware of the words we are actually uttering. Therefore, try this suggestion: Visualize each sentence as a whole before you begin it. Do not open your mouth until you know how the sentence is to close. Make each statement short. When you do begin a sentence, go right through without stopping. Between sentences pause as long as necessary to get the *next* step in mind.

The various errors of carelessness are chiefly the results of failure to look ahead. An impulse moves us and we begin to speak before knowing just how we want to phrase our thought. We get half through a statement and then pause to choose between two different words or constructions. Our voice apparatus has been set going; it is usually not under full control; and when we pause it produces an inarticulate sound like *er—er*, *and—er*, *but—er*, generally without our knowing it. We go on with another statement or part of a statement and stop again. And so we flounder along. Anyone who listens to that sort of talking is kept constantly under a strain. He has to piece together the items of the speaker's thought, to determine what the man means before he can consider the idea. The speaker has not done his part.

Fixing in Advance the Close of a Sentence.—Now when we read aloud we keep the eyes a few words ahead of the voice. Thus we sense what is coming and automatically prepare for it. It is entirely possible to do the same thing in talk. You need not bring every word definitely to mind before beginning to speak, but pick the word which is to close the sentence. If you have that one word in mind you can work directly toward it, just as you can walk through a dark passage if there is a light at the end.

After a while you learn to visualize your thoughts more rapidly, the pauses between sentences become shorter, and your talk flows along just as easily and quickly as if you did not stop to plan each sentence before speaking. You will find also that even

the brief glance ahead will enable you to pick your words more effectively. Your speech will gain color and epigrammatic quality as well as clearness.

This exercise is likely to develop a consciousness, even in casual conversation, of the patterns or formulas of grouping which you employ. But this carries you only through the first stage. If you stop here your speech may be too sharp-cut and definite, may give the impression of dryness and coldness. Therefore, when you have formed this habit of statements that are trim, short and complete, begin to loosen them again. Not aimlessly, but through watching the grouping used by the good speakers among the persons with whom you associate. Imitate them, now one, now another. Study the speech-patterns of play-dialogue both in printed plays and from the lips of actors. Gradually you will acquire a feeling for variety of grouping which will lead to greater readiness in adjusting your manner in the person with whom you are talking, in view of the particular impression you wish to produce.

Study Good Advertising Copy.—There is one form of writing, moreover, which will aid very greatly in building good talk sentences—advertising copy. The statement may seem, at first, surprising. Advertising copy is worked over with utmost care. As with poetry, it takes often a long time to produce. A man may spend a week on an advertisement of two or three paragraphs. Talk, on the other hand, is a creation of the moment. Yet the sentences which the copy-writer finally produces are nearly always *talk* sentences, as truly as the sentences of the dialogue which a good playwright works out. They are short, crisp, meaty, yet easy running. Men who can write copy well can usually talk with some of the same effectiveness of pattern. Study of the structure, the patterns of the *ads*, will familiarize your mind gradually with various pattern devices which can be effectively applied to talk. The sentences you frame in the moment of speaking will rarely be as good as those resulting from the toil of the expert copy-man,

but they will have some of the same qualities of directness and drive.

You have one great advantage over the copy-writer in that you are face to face with your listener; you are stimulated by his response from moment to moment. The listener's presence will do for you, if you are quick to catch its suggestions, what the advertising man must do for himself by effort of imagination.

CHAPTER XXXIII

ENUNCIATION AND PRONUNCIATION

Delivery—The Life Element of Speech.—To consider only words and their grouping would be to leave out perhaps two-thirds of what counts in conveying ideas through speech. How the signals are *delivered* is as important as are the conditions of the transmitting instrument and of the line in telephoning.

There is the matter of sounding the words and sentences clearly and accurately. The standardized sound-groups of a language are not rigid in form like bricks; their sound varies more or less according to who it is that utters them and his situation and mood at the moment. Within certain limits these variations do not hinder the meaning and may even aid it through spurring attention. But when these limits are exceeded, when, for example, the sentences are not articulated plainly or not pronounced in the manner to which we are accustomed, the thought message does not come through. Unfortunately, imperfect utterance is the rule rather than the exception, even among persons otherwise very careful of their social responsibilities—is so common, indeed, that speech which is easily audible and perfectly distinct is apt to receive more attention than sometimes it deserves.

There is also the technique of reinforcing the meaning of the words and sentences through the suggestions of voice and general manner. While each word represents a thought or a fragment of a thought, it is the speaker's manner—his intonation, look and bearing—which indicates in what spirit the words are to be interpreted, whether as carrying their literal meaning, or less or more than this, or even as carrying a meaning quite different from

the dictionary sense. Everyone knows that one can speak the word "No" with an intonation and look that convey "Yes."

Conscious Control of What Has Been Unconscious.—But here is the paradox. The features of delivery, both mechanics and expression, are vitally important elements of the transmission of thought; we are affected by them in the speech of others and our degree of command of them qualifies at every moment the success of our own talk. In fact, how they are managed has actually more to do with carrying our message successfully than have the choice and arrangement of the words. Yet we practically leave all this matter out of our conscious intellectual analysis. When we try to improve our control of speech we are apt to confine our attention to the "logical" matters of words and grouping, of course with unsatisfactory results.

Any thoroughgoing attempt to develop control of communication has to include systematic attention to the physical auxiliaries of speech—the delivery. It involves learning to become clearly aware of physical activities that with virtually everyone have been unconscious. The whole matter is so intimate that each individual has to do the work mostly for himself, but in the elementary stages of the attempt valuable aid may be obtained from instructors. Cool and practical study of delivery aids immensely in every aspect of communication.

Accuracy in Sounding the Signals.—The first end to seek is precision of utterance, accurate production of the sound signals so that they may be recognized easily and quickly. Note the utterance of the men, women or children whom you meet or to whom you talk on the telephone. Do they have to repeat remarks? Why? Do you also have to repeat what you say? What are the reasons in your case? Whose is the fault? In telephone conversation time and temper are saved when the operator receives the number in clear-cut and unmistakable syllables, the first time. In ordinary conversation, are you apt to say "I'm gonna do it"; "You c'n see the moun'ns from the verandah"; "Seein's b'liev'n";

"He holds a gum'mint p'sition." Do you ever say *dooty* for *duty*, or *jest* or *jist* for *just*?

Try uttering the following sentence in the normal way of rapid conversation.

"The actors are to present a play in the theatre and attend the reception at the town hall across the square."

Now repeat the sentence, taking care to sound the syllables italicized, but without exaggerating or mouthing them.

"The *actors* are to present a play *in* the theatre *and* attend the reception *at* the town hall across the square."

Lack of precision in just such little points as these is a serious hindrance to successful speech, not only when telephoning but in every relation of life. It makes everything that is said a little harder to hear and understand. Like poor handwriting, or poor lighting, it causes delay and misunderstanding. More than that, it suggests a certain sloppiness or uncouthness in the speaker—like slovenliness in dress or bad manners.

Something That Anyone Can Master.—A man who cares enough about the impression his speech makes to consider and improve the choice and grouping of his words, will certainly seek to improve in the accuracy of his utterance. As to this point it is possible with comparatively little effort to obtain almost perfect precision.

Sounds and Groups of Sounds.—In considering enunciation we have to consider, first, the individual sounds, and, second, the combination of these into word groups. The words of the English tongue as spoken in America are made up, as already noted, of about fifty different sounds.¹ Of these 24 are what are called *vowels*, 17 of them simple sounds, and 7—known as diphthongs—combinations of the others. The other 26 are what are called *consonants*.

¹ We are here considering, of course, the *sounds* themselves, not the letters of the alphabet by means of which they are represented in our very much mixed-up spelling.

The Vowels.—Vowel sounds are produced as follows: Breath from the lungs is turned into sound by the vocal cords and by means of adjustments of the tongue, soft palate, cheek and lips, the sound is then formed or molded in the mouth and nose into distinguishable tones. Some of these tones are full and easily prolonged, as in *ah-ee-oo*; others are quick and light so that it is hard to produce them alone, such as the vowels in the syllables *bit-bet-bat-but*.

The Consonants.—The consonants are produced as follows: Breath from the lungs, not turned into sound, or tones which have been already formed, may be obstructed, by means of tongue, teeth, lips, or palate in about 26 different ways, to give us the modifications or distinguishable obstructions which we call consonants. As indicated, consonants are of two kinds: obstructed breaths, such as *p, f, t, k, s*, and obstructed sounds *b, v, d, g, z*. They occur singly and in combination, at either end of a syllable. They do not make syllables alone. The consonants might be said to form one sort of link in a chain of speech, the vowels another. Each syllable is a little chain. Each word is a longer chain. It may be a single link: *Oh!*; it may be a vowel link and one or more consonant-links: *no, bow, blow, blown, blasts, bramble*.

Muscle Action the Essential in Articulation.—Now the difficulty as regards enunciation is this: These basic individual sounds are produced by definite muscle movements; if you move certain muscles in a certain way you get a certain sound, otherwise you do not.

For example, when sounding the word *good* the lips are puckered and pushed slightly forward. When sounding the word *get* the lips are drawn back in a half smile. Many people say *good* with their lips in position for *get* and wonder why they are not understood. In sounding the word *little*, the middle of the word—the most essential part—is made by pressing the tip of the tongue against the top of the mouth just behind the teeth, which stops the column of tone and results in two separated

sound-groups or syllables. Many people fail to press the tongue tightly so as to shut off the tone, or instead of using the tip of the tongue they just lay the whole tongue against the roof of the mouth, and the result they get is something like *li'ul*. Try it.

For anyone to correct such errors by means of his ear alone is practically impossible because through long habit his ears mislead him. Almost everyone, perhaps, has had the experience of attempting to correct the utterances of a friend who utters a word inexactly. Try to help a resident of a certain northeastern section to say *idea* instead of *idear*. In nine cases out of ten your friend will say gratefully, "Oh, yes. Now I get it. It ought to be *idear*!"

A Matter of Muscle Training.—But it is entirely possible to correct errors and to learn to speak with perfect distinctness, through studying the muscle actions that produce the different sounds. That is perhaps the most important fact about utterance; it is a matter of muscle action. The *enunciation* rules worked out by the scientists who have studied this subject, the phoneticians, are as definite and certain of results as those for typewriter finger-ing. If you want to speak distinctly the one thing to do is to train the sense of *touch*, or more exactly what the scientists call the *kinaesthetic sense*, the sense of muscular movement.

If you will spend a few minutes every day in experiment and practice you can master the sounds of English in a few months' time. The process consists of analyzing the muscle movements so that you know what they should be and how they feel; then of practicing exercises for the different sounds—you can make these up yourself; then of applying the principles of these exercises in daily talk.

Your first effort to apply the principles of these exercises in daily talk will very likely be disappointing, because you will forget to watch the sense of touch rather than of hearing. Day by day, though, if you keep on, you will find yourself thinking of the matter more often and at last the right habit will become auto-

matic. After a while the sense of hearing will become more discriminating and then that also will help.

Some Exercises.—In order to speak plainly the muscles of jaws, cheeks, lips, and tongue, must be strong and supple so that they will act with the easy precision of a pianist's fingers. There is no question about their strength; the grip of the jaws is powerful enough to support your entire weight. What they lack usually is suppleness; they do not act quickly and precisely.

The following suggestions will help:

1. Relax the lip muscles. In nearly every person of nervous or determined nature, the lips are kept tense all day long and relaxed only in sleep. Many people speak habitually with lips too far drawn back—in the position of *a* in *at*; their jaws move up and down like those of a ventriloquist's manikin. To cure this fault, place your thumb and finger at the corners of the mouth and press them gently while uttering a short sentence. The circular muscle round the mouth, called the *sphincter*, is apt to be pulled out of shape by the resolute set of your lips; pressure with thumb and finger permits the lips to act, for the moment, more *naturally*. Now repeat some nonsense phrase such as:

We wish we wére where Willie wént.

One, t́wo, three, f́our, five, śix, seven éight.

Now take your hand away and repeat the same words, keeping the lips loose. Make up for yourself other series of syllables for practice. In all your talk try to keep the lips a little narrower. That is likely to aid in the accurate formation of more than half of the fifty sounds of the language.

2. Keep the tongue as far forward in the mouth as you can get it. Many people hold it habitually too far back or too low. As a result their speech sounds as if they had "a hot potato in the mouth." When the tongue is not in use—when you are silent—let it rest against the front teeth. This one rule alone, you will find, will do much to make your speech plainer.

Consonants—Lip Sounds.—The following consonant sounds are made with the lips : *p, b, m, w, wh*. To make the lip consonants accurately observe these rules : Press the lips tight together for a little longer than you are accustomed to. Push the lips slightly forward. Localize the sensation in the center of the lips in front of the upper front teeth.

Many people use the upper lip hardly at all. Hold a mirror before your mouth and see whether you move the lips—both of them—in the following exercises :

<i>Sound</i>	<i>As if it were</i>
put	p-p-put
big	b-b-big
many	m-m-many
would	w-w-would
what	hw-hw-hwat

The last sound, *wh*, would be better represented by *hw* as it was formerly written. To produce it blow the air out sharply as you begin to pucker the lips for the *w*.

Two sounds, *f* and *v*, are made by pressing the lower lip against the upper teeth. They offer little difficulty.

Consonants—Tongue Sounds.—It is the tongue consonants, especially *d, t, th, s, z, l*, and *r*, which cause most of our indistinctness. The tongue is in more senses than one an unruly member. We hold it too far back in the mouth. Or we keep it too tense and stiff for a given sound, or else too loose. Or we fail to press it tightly against the teeth, or fail to locate the sensation in the tip.

That first quarter-inch of the tongue is in truth an "essential point" in the matter of distinctness. The tongue-tip ought to be as sensitive and firm as a violinist's finger. For *t, d, l, n, ch, j*, point it like a pencil and touch the top of the mouth just behind the front upper teeth, and your speech is pretty sure to be distinct. In *t*, the tone is shut off entirely. In *d*, some of the tone vibra-

tions come through, as you will discover if you repeat: *t-d, t-d, t-d*.²

In making *n* the tone vibrations pass out through the nose. The following exercise will show this; while repeating *ne-ne-ne-ne*, close the nostrils with your thumb and finger and you get *de-de-de-de*.

In making the sounds of *s, sh, z, zh, r*, and *v*, the *sides* of the tongue are held against the upper teeth, but the tip does not touch.

The sounds *s* and *sh* are sharp hisses, the breath being forced in a whisper between the tongue and the upper teeth. The sound of *s* is easy to make, yet it is very often not made. Listen to people about you and notice the many holes in their speech where the *s* is not sounded at all. The reason is that when *s* is made too loud it is unpleasant; being a whisper it sounds much louder in one's own head than outside; as a result we often soften it too much.

The muscle action for *r* is more complex than that for any other consonant and as a result the sound is uttered in many different ways in America and is often omitted entirely.

Perhaps the best suggestion to offer here would be somewhat as follows: The sound of *r* may be produced by curling back the tip of the tongue very slightly and flipping or snapping it forward. You can acquire the tongue action more easily if you begin by placing an *h*, made very lightly, before the *r*. Try such an exercise as this: *hri-hri-hring; hri-hri-hrich; hra-hra-hrat*. Once you have identified the sensation of curling the tongue the *h*, which is mere "scaffolding," may be omitted, and you get *ri-ri-ring, ri-ri-rich, ra-ra-rat*.

The sounds of *k, g*, and *ng* are made by touching the *center* of the tongue, not the tip, against a point in the roof of the mouth *farther back* than for *t* and *d*. Make the sounds as far forward as you can. When you place them farther back than necessary, it is hard to utter them quickly, especially *g* and *ng*. That is the

² Here and in other consonant drills in this chapter you should learn to make the consonant sound *without adding any vowel sound*. This exercise does not call for *te-de*, *te-de*, etc., but for consonants alone—*t-d, t-d, t-d*.

main reason why so many of us say *goin'*, *comin'*, *waitin'*, *bein'*, although we "know better"; we put the tongue into a position in which it cannot act quickly enough.

The One Thing Most Important—Accuracy of Vowels.—

The vowels of English require even more care than the consonants, but the difficulties are of a different nature. The essential is not to confuse one sound with another. If you are not careful the vowels of minor syllables all tend to lapse into the colorless sound of *uh*. Listen, and you are likely to agree. By the way, do *you* say *agree* or *uh-gree*? No one thing does so much to give your utterance the effect of easy precision which everyone desires as accuracy in differentiating the vowel sounds.

Lips, Tongue, and Jaw—Especially the Tongue.—In sounding vowels, three factors come into play:

1. The position of the lips; whether drawn back, loosely open, puckered, and so forth—how widely the mouth is opened sideways.
2. The position of the lower jaw—how far the mouth is opened up and down.
3. The position of the tongue; whether high or low in the mouth.

Suppose we consider vowels with respect to tongue position.

Eight Common Vowel Sounds.—First, consider eight of the chief vowel sounds—beginning with the sound of *e*, as in *he*, *meat*, *machine*, following this with the other sounds of *e*, then with those of *a*, and closing with those of *aw*, *o*, and *oo*.

e	as in	meat
i	" "	mit
e	" "	met
a	" "	mat
ah	" "	mah
aw	" "	maw
o	" "	mow
oo	" "	moo

To make the first sound, hold a mirror before your mouth, put your tongue as near the roof of the mouth as you can get it—just a slit between—and say: *meat-meat-meat*; *eat-eat-eat*; *ee-ee-ee*. Draw the lips well back at the sides.

For the second sound, *i* in *mit*, the tongue is not quite so high as in *ee* and the lips not quite so wide.

For the third, *e* in *met*, the tongue is a little lower still and the lips less wide.

For the fourth, *a* in *mat*, the tongue is nearly level; the lips are made oblong; the jaw is dropped slightly.

For the fifth, *ah* in *mah*, the tongue is slightly below level; the lips rounded; the jaw dropped, so that the mouth is what is called “wide open.”

For the sixth, *aw* in *marw*, the tongue is more hollowed; the lips are rounded; the mouth not quite so wide open.

For the seventh, *o* in *morw*, the tongue is much hollowed and the lips somewhat puckered and pushed forward.

Finally, for *oo* in *moor*, the tongue lies at the bottom of the mouth and the lips are puckered tight, as in whistling.

A Combination Exercise.—Now go straight through the following exercise, fixing attention chiefly on the regular shift in the position of the tongue:

ee — ee — ee
 i — i — i
 e — e — e
 a — a — a
 ah — ah — ah
 aw — aw — aw
 o — o — o
 oo — oo — oo

Finally, sound the eight vowels once each in a single series; *ee, i, e, a, ah, aw, o, oo*.

If you practice this simple vowel scale a few times a day for

two weeks, doing exactly what is here outlined, it should lay the foundation of a habit of accurate utterance of vowels.

The Other Vowels.—After you have mastered these sounds, you can fill in the various intermediate vowels. It is especially in these intermediate vowels that the English language differs from other European languages. In French, Italian, and some others the vowel sounds are fewer and less sharply differentiated. In English we have many and the discriminations are delicate.

After the *i* of *mit* comes a lighter form of the same sound which occurs in subordinate syllables only.

After the *e* of *met* comes a longer form of the same sound which occurs before *r* and which we represent in our spelling by some combination of *a* as in *air*, *pare*, *bear*.

After the *a* of *mat* come three other *a* sounds, namely: those found in *idea*, *ask* and *artistic*—all of them quicker and lighter forms of the open *ah*.

After the *ah* comes the colorless “neutral” vowel, *uh*, as in *up*. You hear it when a child says *mama* indistinctly; somewhat like *mummer*. The tongue is hollowed a little. It is perhaps the easiest sound to utter.

After this comes a longer form of the same sound, used in *her*, *turn*, *first*, *earth*.

Before the sound of *aw*, in *maw*, comes a quicker, lighter form with the tongue not quite so low, which is used in *not*, *pot*, *odd*, *dog*.

Before the *o* of *woe* comes a quicker sound used in unaccented syllables, as in *obey*.

Before the *oo* of *pool* comes a quicker and lighter form used in *good*, *book*.

After the single vowels are mastered, the double vowels are easy. Each of these consists of two single vowels run swiftly together so that they practically blend, as follows: The sound called “long *a*” in *gay*, *weigh*, *sail*, is made by running *e* into *ee*. The sound called “long *i*” in *light*, *aisle*, *fly*, is made by running *ah* into *ee*. The sound of *out*, *down*, *round*, is made by running *ah* into *oo*. The sound called “long *u*” as it is found in minor

syllables, in the first syllable of *duration*, for example, is made by running short *i* into *oo*. The sound called "long *u*" as it is found in accented syllables or in *feud*, *cube*, *due*, is made by running *ee* into *oo*. The sound of *oil* or *boy* is made by running *aw* into short *i*. The form of *o* commonly called "long *o*"—is really diphthongal, beginning with an *o* sound and changing into *oo*. In monosyllables without final consonant such as *go*, *blow*, this is most apparent. In unstressed syllables it approximates a simple *o* as in *rotation*, *profession*, *moment*.

Nests of Consonants.—It is especially important to have the mouth muscles strong and supple when speaking English, because our language has so many consonants and particularly so many nests of consonants. Take for example the last three words: *nests of consonants*. In some languages, Italian for example, or Japanese, it is extremely rare for more than two consonants to occur together. In English, however, we have thousands of words like *breadths*, *strengths*, *sixteenths*, *tests*, *instruct*, *depths*, *exemption*. And as soon as you begin to build words together, the nests of consonants multiply.

Speaking our consonants indistinctly is one of the besetting sins of Americans. People think that it is impossible to speak both plainly and quickly in a language filled with consonant sounds. That is not true. Consonants offer little hindrance if you know how to utter them. Moreover, it is the consonants which form the backbone of our language, which make it the most vigorous, varied, and beautiful of the great languages—as Jespersen calls it, "a masculine tongue."

This is the way to deal with nests of consonants: Press the first consonant sound tight and hold it till the second is ready—as a pianist holds one finger down till the next finger is ready. This action has two results:

1. It dams up the *breath* by holding back the first consonant, and when the breath is released there is extra *power* to force out the following sounds.

2. It starts the muscles acting vigorously, and the vigorous action continues and helps to carve out the consonants which follow.

Combining Sounds—Continual Adjustment.—This matter of the nests of consonants brings us to the general question of the combination of individual sounds. The elementary sounds of the language are always combined into *patterns*—in syllables, words and phrases, and sentences. The ear takes notice of this series of sound-patterns. To pay conscious attention to all the single sounds would be impossible, alike for listener and for speaker.

In combining sounds a complex, delicate process of adjustment is always going on. As noted on the first page of this chapter, the individual sounds are continually being modified slightly in length; spaced out, held for a longer or shorter time—as a printer adjusts the letters in a line of type. Furthermore, the successive groups of sounds are framed in pauses or silences of various lengths. In spontaneous talk all this is done automatically, without our realizing it. In conscious talk which is unskilful, and very often in the reading aloud of other people's writing, it is done incorrectly.

For example, when you get the impression of egotism from a man's talk, you can often trace the impression to his wrong distribution of time; the word "I," which all of us must use constantly, is dwelt on unduly. Yet the fact may be that the speaker is not in reality egotistic, that he appears to obtrude himself merely because, through nervousness or awkwardness, he cannot control his enunciation machinery. Watch your own speech, and note whether you stress the "I" thus unintentionally.

Factors in Adjustment—Ease of Utterance.—Now the factors which enter into the process of grouping sounds are two. The first one is ease of utterance. This is a matter of physiology. Some individual sounds and groups stand out more than others with the same amount of effort because they are particularly easy or particularly difficult for the speech machinery to produce.

To illustrate: Syllables composed of smooth, full vowels and consonants that are readily prolonged stand out clearly, like *mean*, *days*, *climb*, *rose*, *you*, *arm*. On the other hand, syllables composed of difficult sounds do not stand out; for example, *odd*, *but*, *fit*, etc. The phrase *et cetera* is in itself an example. If, however, these difficult sounds are piled up, the syllable often becomes prominent because of the special effort required to produce it, as in *tricked*, *breadth*, *scratch*.

Factors in Adjustment—Logic.—The second factor is the relative importance of the thought—the principle of accent, or emphasis. In every group that is larger than the single syllable, there is a core or nucleus of thought and there is subordinate matter. As noted in Chapter XXXII, in every sentence there are a few words, usually nouns and verbs, which carry the main idea. In a paragraph the thought generally focuses in one of the sentences. Similarly, in each word there is one main syllable. Now, whether with words, phrases, or larger groups, this master portion, the *core*, needs to be spoken louder and generally somewhat more slowly than the rest. The individual sounds within this core are given extra care, and those in minor portions of the group are subordinated.

Standard and Colloquial Speech.—Careful students of language have pointed out that we actually recognize three different *levels* of speech:

Careful or standard speech

Colloquial speech

Careless or slovenly speech

To use invariably the standard speech, to say always with painful correctness *was*, *of*, *for*, would be generally felt to be too fastidious. In utterance, as in dress and manner a sensible man will be neither slovenly nor overprecise.

For example, we might take the universal phrase of greeting, "How do you do?" This is rarely uttered completely, but nearly

always in a form which is shorter and lighter, somewhat like "How dedo?" or even "How do?" On the frontier, they tell us, it used to be almost "Howdy?"

Some years ago in his "Modern English,"³ Professor Krapp gave an amusing example to illustrate how the utterance of even careful speakers is modified in informal talk, in the following passage:

"What's the French for 'I don't understand'? I want to let this Frenchman know I can't understand what he's saying. It's rather odd, I can talk French myself, but I can't understand it when it's spoken, etc."

Professor Krapp reproduces the first two sentences in what is known as phonetic script, to show how they would sound. Using the ordinary English alphabet we may represent these sentences somewhat as follows:

"Hwátsthuhfrénch foruhdóntunderstánd? Uhwántuhlét thisfrénchmannó uhcántunderstánd hwatezsáyng."

The careful speaker, who wishes to be understood, must not go too far in this direction. It would not be wise to talk thus in a long-distance telephone conversation, for instance. Only when you know a language closely, do you know how far to go in modifying thus the recognized sound-patterns. This is the last and most baffling thing for a foreigner to learn. He can talk "standard English," usually, long before he has much skill with "colloquial English."

The Problem of the Foreigner.—What you notice about the English speech of an educated foreigner who has a good stock of words in our tongue, is not the slight error in the production of an individual sound, but rather a violation of the characteristic American rhythm—of those qualities of tone and changes of pitch which give speech its familiar effect on the ear. If you will give

³ George Philip Krapp, *Modern English: Its Growth and Present Use*, Charles Scribner's Sons.

close attention to the speech of foreigners, you will note their utterance of such everyday expressions as "How strange"; "Thank you very much"; "I think you know what I mean"; "No, I don't mean just that"; "I am afraid I must have expressed myself badly"; "Can you spare me a few minutes?"; "May I go with you?"

Do all foreigners use the same *melody* or variation of *pitch*? Do the Englishman, the Irishman, the Scot, employ the very same *rhythm* or variation of *time*? It will be difficult to take accurate note at first, but if you make consistent effort your ear will before long become acute. Conscious sound recognition, made highly accurate by daily practice, is the foundation of correct and beautiful speech. Learning to recognize the melody and rhythm of speech, you will be better able to judge mistakes in utterance. You will not confuse the obscuring of final syllables, of monosyllables of minor importance—prepositions or other connectives—with deviations from the accepted combinations of sounds that good usage requires.

For All of Us—Accuracy First.—Few of us are in any danger of being too precise. We are constantly impelled to push too far the liberties we take with the customs of standard utterance. If we wish to convey our meaning most fully, and with least effort on the part of our listener, we should try to come as near as possible to the level of standard speech. Indistinctness is partly due to carelessness. The chief cause, however, is that we have not been thoroughly trained to use our articulation machinery with accuracy.

Pronunciation

The other point to consider with reference to utterance is pronunciation. For delivery to be satisfactory the sound groups must be uttered not only distinctly but according to the accepted custom of the community in which you live.

Not Difficult, but Highly Important.—Pronunciation is a highly important matter because it is something which everyone notices, even persons who pay little attention to other features of speech. For example, if a speaker addressing an audience pronounces a familiar word in a strange way, perhaps half the company will notice it. Ask them about the speaker's tones or his sentence structure and they cannot tell you. As already noted, if a radio speaker makes a single slip in the pronunciation that is usual in the section, hundreds of people are likely to write in about it at once. The pronunciation, indeed, is the identifying feature of the code signal. If the outline is different from what we are accustomed to, no matter how clear-cut it is, the signal cannot be recognized.

Nevertheless, in the effort to improve your command of speech, pronunciation is not a thing which will give you serious trouble. It involves no radical alteration in physical or mental habits. At bottom it is a matter merely of sensitiveness to the customs of those about you, like correct dress. If you develop sensitiveness of ear, so that you notice at once how other persons sound their words, and acquire ready command of *enunciation*, so that your muscles readily produce the sounds you desire, *pronunciation* will to a very large degree take care of itself.

Words That Give Trouble—Four Classes.—The words whose pronunciation causes trouble fall into four classes. Those which bother us most consciously, and quite out of proportion to their importance, belong to what is called in Chapter XXXI the reserve stock, words which we come upon in reading and occasionally have to employ, unexpectedly, in speech. As to such words there is a ready aid, a good dictionary. The habit of looking up the pronunciation of every new word which catches your attention in conversation or reading will cure this particular difficulty.

The second group, which varies with each individual, consists of words which we learned incorrectly in youth and which for

some reason we have never chanced to correct. Every now and then, for example, someone confesses to habitual mispronunciation of the word *misled* as *mizzled*. You will gradually correct such words—they will probably not be numerous—when you have formed the habit of listening carefully to the speech of other people. If some one whom you know to be a careful speaker says *misled* when you have been accustomed to say *mizzled*, consult your dictionary.

The third class consists of words about which there is difference of opinion. As to some of them the dictionaries give two forms of pronunciation; as to others the different dictionaries disagree. Regarding these, do not worry. Note what the dictionaries say, then note what form is used by the careful speakers of your acquaintance, and decide for yourself. Professor Krapp says in "Modern English":

The standards of correct speech must be found . . . not in the printed or written form of language, but in the normal, natural conversation of daily life . . . Consciously or unconsciously every speaker follows the customs or rules of his own special group; for him these are the laws of his language . . . Now, what a speaker of today is chiefly concerned to know is what the laws or rules of his own present day speech, of his own group, shall be. To determine this there is only one means, and that is observation.

He must turn and examine the speech, the living speech of those persons with whom he is thrown in contact, with such added help as he may get from books and dictionaries in extending the field of his observation. In case of a doubtful pronunciation, he must determine what group of speakers he will unite himself with, that is, the customs of what speakers he will imitate or follow . . . The choice of the group with which he will unite himself then lies in his own hands, and, other things being equal, will usually be in favor of the cultivated speech.

But do not carry such fastidiousness too far. Some people waste valuable time in disputing over "puzzle" words—whether *squalor*, for example, should be *squaylor* or *squahlor*, though in truth there is little occasion for using the word at all in talk. Others have "pet" words which have in some way been brought

specially to their attention, and they judge a stranger largely by the way he sounds these words. Many persons are careful to pronounce the vowel in words like *ask*, *bath*, *class* with the exact sound represented on page 584, yet sound the word *idea* as if it were *idear*.

The Problem of Dialect.—The principal difficulty for any of us is a matter of dialect. Dialect may be defined as the special modification of the vocabulary and sounds of a language shown in its use by the people of a particular locality, race, or social group. Here we are concerned with differences of sound.

“The truth is,” say the editors of the Standard Dictionary, “that we all speak dialect.” When Bernard Shaw whimsically remarked, at a meeting of the Royal Society of Literature, in London, that there were 43 millions of languages spoken in Great Britain, he was thinking, largely, of these “dialect” differences. The pronunciation which each of us employs habitually is nearly always the one we picked up unconsciously in childhood from the persons around us. This is more or less modified later on by school instruction, by changes in environment or in fashion and by our own self-criticism, but on the whole, it remains with us. Now this habitual speech varies more or less according as we live in New England, in New York City, in the South, the Middle West, or the far West. Take for example, the word *war*. It is generally sounded by easterners of generally careful speech as if rhyming with *for*; by Alabamans, also careful in speech, almost as if rhyming with *woe*; by people from Utah, also careful, as rhyming with *far*.

Geographical Variations.—All parts of our country accept the authority of the great dictionaries as marking the proper pronunciation of our words. Practically, however, the dictionary descriptions of the sounds are *interpreted differently* in different localities, according to the customs of each region.

When you criticize Jones’s pronunciation it is rarely his utterance of one of the long or strange words of the language which

you refer to; those he is likely to utter much as you do. It is the way he speaks the familiar terms which we all learned in childhood. When you talk of his eastern, or western, or southern, or northern accent, what you mean is that his way of uttering the words of common speech is unlike the way in which you and those around you speak. Very likely, if you were to move to his part of the country, Jones and his friends would make much the same sort of criticism of your own speech.

No Arbitrary Standard Possible in America.—In France, and in Germany, they have definitely prescribed official standards of pronunciation, drawn up by committees of scholars under authority of the government, and observed, for example, in the official theatres. In America we have no official standard, nor are we likely ever to have. No section can claim the right to set it. Our standard will probably grow up slowly, by gradual approximation of the practice of all sections.

But as people of all sections improve in their command of enunciation—as they travel more and as education increases—the differences tend to lessen. If you were to hear cultivated men from Boston, New York, Virginia, Mississippi, Indiana, California, Halifax, Vancouver, talking together—indeed, even if the group included those from London, Oxford, Edinburgh, Dublin, Australia, etc.—while there would be recognizable differences, they would be comparatively slight.

Dialects Coming from “Hyphenate” English.—In recent years another set of American dialects has grown up, namely, those found among immigrants from non-English-speaking countries. Such persons form a large part of our population and they have once more brought the influence of other languages to bear upon our speech.

The peculiarities of these later dialects might seem to be more troublesome than those of older time, all of which were forms of English. The mother tongues of our new citizens differ widely from English. The muscle actions they require and the resulting

sounds, are correspondingly different from standard American custom. But there is no deliberate effort to perpetuate these languages. Foreigners, and especially their children, want to learn English. The children acquire the prevailing accent of the locality where they live and in two generations most non-English speech peculiarities have disappeared. Italian children in Boston talk with the unmistakable Boston accent; in New York they talk like New Yorkers; in Birmingham, like other Alabamans.

Practical Suggestion—The Dictating Machine.—The difficulty in testing your own speech lies in the fact that you do not hear it as it sounds to others. You hear it always from the inside; you hear that of other people from the outside; you cannot compare. To find out what your own dialect is, and eliminate any peculiarities that stand out too strongly, there are certain very useful aids.

One is the dictating machine. Enlist the help of some friend whose speech you know to be fairly careful, and whose accent is different from your own. Get hold of a dictating machine, and recite or read aloud a passage of verse or prose, covering part of a cylinder with it. Then ask your friend to make a record of the same passage on the other part of the cylinder. When you put on the reproducer and turn back, you will for the first time hear your own voice from the *outside*, hear it as it sounds to someone else. Having your friend's record on the same cylinder will bring clearly to your attention some of your own special peculiarities.

If you do this repeatedly with different acquaintances, gradually you will begin to form an idea of how your voice actually sounds when saying this or that, and then your progress will be faster. To supplement this personal experimentation, you will find it very helpful to purchase some of the phonographic records of American speech which have been prepared by the Modern Language Association.⁴

⁴ These may be obtained by addressing the secretary of the Modern Language Association of America, New York University, New York City.

The Phonetic Alphabet.—Another practical suggestion for developing reliable control of enunciation and quick sensitiveness to pronunciation is that of learning to use the phonetic alphabet. The symbols of the International Phonetic Association⁵ are in wide use. The time required to familiarize yourself with these symbols, so that you can use them to make certain of the exact sounds of troublesome words, to reading phonetic transcriptions of how other persons speak, and to make phonetic records for yourself, will bring ample returns. It will certainly develop more acute sensitiveness to speech sounds. If you are able to jot down in phonetic script a few phrases of the remarks of this person or that through the day, you will have, before long, a little list of *characteristic* “accents” or styles of speech which will form a basis both for listening to others and for improving your own speech. If you have use for other tongues, French, German, Spanish, you will find the International Phonetic Code a great help. It is a key to the oral difficulties of languages.

You will find very practical aid in a book by Professor Krapp, on American pronunciation.⁶ Study of his detailed comments on pronunciation variations as found in actual speech will prove not only interesting but far more useful than an attempt to serve this purpose through a dictionary alone. If you have mastered the Phonetic Alphabet you will be able to read aloud for yourself the specimens which he gives of actual speech of Americans from various sections or groups. Along with this you might get two little books by Walter Ripman, a distinguished authority in England, on “Good Speech” and “Elements of Phonetics.”⁷

Why be limited, irritated, embarrassed on occasion by any defect in the mere mechanics of speech?

⁵ The works of the modern authorities on language, all employ the scientific symbols. The books by Professor Krapp contain them. You will find detailed treatment in Walter Ripman, *The Sounds of English*, E. P. Dutton.

⁶ George P. Krapp, *Pronunciation of Standard English in America*, Oxford University Press.

⁷ Walter Ripman, *Good Speech: An Introduction to English Phonetics*, E. P. Dutton & Co. *Elements of Phonetics*, English, French, and German, E. P. Dutton & Co.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE VOICE

The Power and Charm of a Good Voice.—It is amazing how little care the ordinary man bestows upon his own voice, yet how richly attention to it may be repaid.

All persons, learned and unschooled, young and old, are pleased instantly and powerfully by the beautiful voice of a great singer, a great actor or orator. The golden tones of Caruso or John McCormack, of Melba, Patti, or Jenny Lind, go straight to the hearts of the millions, whatever the language in which they sing. When Lord Lytton, the wit of fifty years ago, said in his rhymed novel, "Lucille":

Of all the operas Verdi wrote,
The best, to my mind, is the "Trovatore,"
And Mario, with a tenor note,
Could soothe the souls in Purgatory,

he put into whimsical terms a universal feeling.

So with nearly all the actors whose fame has been greatest—Garrick and Mrs. Siddons; Booth, Coquelin, Sara Bernhardt and Eleonora Duse; Otis Skinner, Edith Wynne Matthieson, and Walter Hampden. So with many of the leaders in public life who have widely swayed popular feeling—O'Connell, Gladstone, and Bright in England; in America, Webster, Clay, Wendell Phillips, Beecher, and in our own day, William Jennings Bryan, whose magnificent voice almost won him the presidency.

Senator Hoar of Massachusetts wrote, near the close of a life time in public affairs:

When every other faculty of the orator is acquired, it sometimes almost seems as if voice were nine-tenths, and everything else but one-

tenth, of the consummate orator. It is impossible to overrate the importance to his purpose of that matchless instrument, the human voice.

What is far less generally recognized, we are all affected just as surely, though as a rule unconsciously, by the voices of those with whom we deal in ordinary intercourse. Slight variations in the tones of the person with whom we are conversing prompt us, without our realizing it, to gayety, boredom, suspicion, indignation, or hearty confidence. The sound of the voice is indeed the most potent single factor in the communication of thought and impulse in speech. Just think back over your own interviews of the last few days—the last few hours—and analyze coolly and fully just what happened. You may be astonished at the effects which must be attributed to the sound of the voice of the other man, or woman. The significant point is that most of the time the effect is produced unconsciously; it is only when you make yourself stop and think about it that you recognize the influence which the voice has exerted.

Possibilities of Your Own Voice.—Now, because the effects of the voice in common conversation are so largely unconscious, very few of us give any conscious attention whatever to the management of our own voices, in our dealings with other people. It hardly ever occurs to us to experiment with our voices, or to make any systematic effort to tune them up, to render them more practically effective in conveying our ideas and wishes. And yet the voice of any intelligent person can be immensely improved with comparatively little effort.

Do you know what your own voice sounds like, to other people? You hear your voice always from the inside. Unless you have listened to it as reproduced on a phonograph, or a dictaphone record, you have not the least idea of its true character. It may have grave defects, such as you greatly dislike in the voices of other persons, and yet you may be entirely unaware that you are thus open to criticism. On the other hand, it is just as likely that your voice—your own everyday voice—has qualities

which you might well be proud of if you knew of them, which suggest energy and sturdiness of nature, or snap and vivacity, or thoughtfulness, or true geniality.

The fact is, any man of enough brains, force and stability to be carrying responsible work is pretty certain to give some indication of it in his voice. A man who is above the average in mental keenness, in calmness of judgment, or in sensitiveness and delicacy of taste, will almost invariably have some quality of charm or attractiveness in his voice, in spite of defects resulting from bad habits of tone production. A little systematic care maintained long enough to fix good habits, would probably remove the defects and give full play to qualities that are an asset.

Every Voice Can Be Improved.—Few persons have any notion of what is involved in improving the voice. Probably most persons think of voice as something unchanging—like blue eyes or long legs—not to be altered, certainly, except through the elaborate and mysterious course of instruction pursued by professional singers. As the ordinary man has no thought of becoming a professional singer or entertainer he never thinks of voice training as something for his own attention. Perhaps also there is some vague feeling, from observation of persons who have had their voices “trained,” that the training has hindered rather than helped their general effectiveness in social and business contacts; that it has developed the power of making pleasing sounds but lessened, if anything, the power of conveying worthwhile ideas effectively.

Now in reality improving the voice is merely removing the defects that hinder or nullify the natural good features, whatever they may be, and permitting the voice to function always as it does when you are at your best. It is like improving your bodily carriage through setting up drill. Improvement of one's voice reinforces everything else one may do toward better command of communication. It makes possible more distinct, accurate and easy utterance of words and word-groups, and aids the suggestions

both of words and of bodily expression. What is most important, the melodious and expressive tones developed through study and care give immediate pleasure to the ear, and of themselves tend to win the hearer's attention and to keep him in a favorable state of mind regardless of the meaning of the words that may have to be uttered.

Anyone who desires can develop a good speaking voice. As with articulation, good tones are a matter of proper muscle-action. Right muscle action can be acquired by anyone who will practice consistently a few simple exercises. Improvement comes most easily in youth, of course, but it can be secured also in maturity. The muscles and tissues involved in the production of the voice are so strong and firmly knit that they almost never become crippled or really incapacitated. Even after years of misuse they can in large measure be toned up again through proper exercises. Indeed, there are few phases of our habitual activities in which systematic effort for improvement is so strikingly helpful as in the mechanics of utterance.

Individuality Never Lost.—Bear in mind that improving one's voice does not mean altering its nature. That, indeed, is impossible. Every voice is individual; its essential character can be changed no more than one's finger prints. Some voices are high in pitch; others low; some are ringing or vibrating; others smooth and even. Such differences come from permanent differences in the size and shape of the vocal apparatus. But every voice has capacities of pleasant sound. And with every voice there are occasions, now and then, when all the factors of thought and delivery happen to work properly together, and as a result the voice is audible, expressive and pleasing. "Everyone has a good voice hidden away for his friends." Improving one's voice means merely setting up muscle habits which produce this proper coordination of activities all the time.

You may know personally of at least one case of a gentleman, of undeniable polish and charm, in whose cultivated and pleasing

voice may be recognized the last remaining traces of foreign intonation. In his conversation there is no evidence to call up the picture of twenty-five years before, when an immigrant boy, lately arrived, behind a pushcart in the Port of New York, raised a harsh falsetto in the din of a slum street. What has brought about the change? Native ability, a sensitive ear, good judgment, taste—as they were developed—and persistent care and application.

Results Attainable.—You can do a great deal for yourself. You can do a great deal more with the help of an instructor or coach. You can acquire the technique of good tone almost as readily as that of a fair golf stroke, and at scarcely more expense.

Good results will show in a few months. In a year the improvement will be manifest to everyone you meet. While the vocal apparatus is highly elaborate and complex, it can be readily controlled and directed through attention to a few key muscle-activities. If these were taught carefully to children, together with clear explanation of the nature and function of the voice, the general improvement within a single generation would be tremendous. If the ordinary man or woman, beginning in mature life, would invest in one half-hour lesson a week for a year, plus fifteen minutes' daily practice of exercises, the general improvement would still be very great. Certainly, a year's systematic attention to this matter, under competent guidance, will bring out and develop the qualities of your voice, the powers you possess but do not use.

The Two Marks of a Good Voice—Vitality and Ease.—A good voice gives always the impression of easy strength. First of all, it has *vitality*. That is to say, the tones are clearly audible and convey a suggestion of the speaker's health and vigor. It has also flexibility—ease. That is to say, it is constantly varying in loudness, in pitch, and “quality” of tone, according to the nature of the message—sometimes sharp, sometimes gentle; now like a flute, now a trumpet, now a drum. That is true of any voice, when rightly developed and given a chance. Both these character-

istics depend on muscle control. It has been pointed out in Chapter XXXIII that in the production of tones of which our ears take note—and this is true of either speech or singing—there are two stages. Sound vibrations are first set up in the throat by forcing air from the lungs over a sounding membrane—the *vocal cords*—in the larynx. The vocal cords are made to vibrate by the passage of the breath somewhat as are the lips of a reed instrument—a clarinet. Then these sound-vibrations, which when first produced are very soft—like a low hum—are reverberated and *magnified* in the cavities of the mouth, naso-pharynx (the large cavity behind the nose) and the nose itself—just as the faint sound-vibrations produced by drawing a bow across a violin string are magnified by reverberation in the violin box.

The entire process is very complicated, involving the continuous correlation of many sets of muscles—forty pairs or so—in mouth, throat, neck and trunk. Some of the muscle-adjustments are entirely automatic, not to be affected by will. Others, as just noted, though they appear automatic because largely governed by habits which have grown up from infancy, can be brought under control by conscious effort until at last new habits are set up which in their turn become virtually automatic.

Control of Breathing and of Resonance.—Improving the voice comes down to getting control, through intelligent study, first of the sets of muscles which are concerned in *breathing*, in starting the sound vibrations, and then of the sets which are concerned in magnifying and reverberating the vibrations, in giving the tone what is called its *resonance*. In connection with both breathing and resonance it is possible to find a control point. Once you have found these control points the rest is only a matter of careful and persistent practice.

The Foundation—Right Breathing

How Do You Breathe?—First of all, consider your habits of breathing. Right breathing is the indispensable foundation of a

good voice, as regards both vitality and ease. Few persons understand how to manage the breath so as to apply it properly to the vocal cords when speaking or singing. As a result the tones of many adults are jerky and uneven, or strained and harsh, or thin and piping, or breathy and puffing.

When you have to talk continuously for some minutes in a tone a little louder than usual—as when making a speech—or when you have to converse more than usual in the day, are you apt to grow hoarse? Does your throat become sore? Does your voice sometimes “break”? The fault is improper breathing.

The essential for proper breathing for speech or singing is merely this: Have plenty of air in the lungs when you speak, and breathe it out across the vocal cords steadily and evenly, without cramping or forcing the tiny muscles in the larynx—which are not under control of the will, but which can be put under heavy strain through wrong use of the big trunk muscles that drive out the breath from the lungs. If you can learn to breathe out properly, whenever you speak, your tones will always be substantial, steady, and easily sufficient for any purposes of conversation and for most public speaking.

All Breathe Rightly in Infancy.—Now in this connection there are two significant facts that are highly encouraging. The first is that all of us breathe properly in infancy. A baby has perfect coordination of the breathing muscles. That is why a baby can scream at the top of its lungs for ten minutes and then go off into a pianissimo coo without a break in the stream of sound—something which taxes the skill of a professional singer. As children grow up, however, nearly all of them lose this automatic coordination of the speech and breathing muscles. The youngster discovers only too soon that it is possible to produce audible tones without using the breathing muscles *fully*. Under the influence of preoccupation it forms lazy habits of applying the breath and unknowingly develops a spotty and inefficient voice. Then come colds, and perhaps catarrh, in very many cases the abnormal

growth of adenoid tissue in the nose, and other ailments, all of which contribute to bad breathing habits. The result is that it is the rare exception to find an adult who breathes, either when speaking or when silent, in the way nature intended.

Recovering the Right Method.—But the second fact, which bears directly on your personal problem, is this: Everyone, young or old, continues to breathe in exactly the same way as the baby, one-third of the day—when we are fast asleep. If you can discover how you breathe in sound sleep, and apply the same method during your waking hours, your problem is solved. It is entirely possible to do this, to recover the coordination of the breathing muscles which we had in infancy. It can be done by means of simple exercises that can be fitted into the routine of daily life.

Some Breathing Exercises.—You have *seen a dog bark*, when he puts his “heart into it!” You know how his chest jerks inward as he emits each “tone.” He is forcing the air across the instrument in *his* throat. That is, in very crude form, what we human beings do, in all our speech and song. We first draw the air in by expanding the body at the waist, then drive it out by contracting the trunk muscles.

Only, we must expel the air gently and gradually—hardly ever in fierce jerks as in the case of our friend the dog.

Getting the Sensation.—Suppose you try first these three exercises:

1. Lying flat on your back—no pillow beneath your head—breathe deeply in and out ten times. Keep the mouth closed and breathe through the nose. Lay your hand on your body just below the end of the breastbone and you will feel the trunk expand as the breath is drawn in, and contract as it is breathed out.

2. Now, in the same position, breathe in deeply as before but this time count aloud, *one-two-three-four-five*, on each breath as you drive it out. After each *five* breathe in again slowly but without straining until the lungs are well filled. As you utter the words

one-two-three-four-five you will feel the chest muscles gradually contracting under your hand, forcing out the air—somewhat as when you squeeze the end of a tube of paint. Repeat the exercise ten times. If you were to try this for the first time in another position you might not get the right effect, but if you lie flat on the back and are careful to breathe deeply you are bound to get the proper action.

3. Now stand on your feet and repeat Exercise 2 another ten times, resting your hand on your chest as before. Having already identified the sensation you can reproduce it while on your feet.

Applying the Method.—After practicing these first exercises two or three days, try the following:

4. Repeat Exercise 3, but instead of counting speak a short sentence—as many words as you can easily manage—contracting the muscles slightly to drive out each word. For example:

“This is the way to do it.”

“When in the course of human events . . .”

“Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of their party . . .”

Utter as many words on each breath as you can manage easily, but no more. Feel a definite contraction of the muscles on each word, indeed, on each syl-la-ble of a long word. A long sentence, like the third one in the list above, may be divided, taking the breath in again at the pause.

A Reading Exercise.—After two or three days more, during which you have practiced these first four exercises, go on to this one:

5. Note first the natural breathing places—which are usually at the ends of clauses—and then sound each section on one breath with a definite contraction of the muscles for each word. Turn back to Chapter XXI, or to one of the chapters in Part V, and

read aloud the first paragraph of one of the extracts, sounding the words in the same way as in Exercise 4.

After you can read these passages easily, getting the breath under each word, pick out other passages for yourself—any passages at all, either in this book, or in a newspaper, or letter, and apply the same method. Take a fresh passage each day. With a few weeks of this reading practice, ten minutes a day, this method of breathing will probably come easy to you, and you will apply it readily to any passage you pick up.

Breathing Right While Talking.—Now when this stage is reached, begin applying the same deliberate method to your ordinary talk whenever you can remember. That is what you are aiming for. The exercises given above are only preparatory. For a while you will often forget, but if you keep trying you can certainly develop the habit of this regular, steady breathing in all your talk. You will, in fact, transfer to your waking hours the habit of deep, quiet breathing which nature has preserved for you when fast asleep. By and by you will gain a sort of automatic sense of the play of the breathing muscles—gentle, but constant and firm—with every word and nearly every syllable. Then, whether you talk fast or slowly, in loud tones or in soft tones, you will be putting the power of your lungs under each group of words. That of itself will do much to make your voice better, more solid and more agreeable. Is it not worth attempting?

The Help of a Good Teacher.—Such muscle training, of course, can be acquired much better and more quickly from a teacher—as in the case of golf, swimming, or any other muscle exercise. It would be a wise investment to inquire around and find a really good teacher of singing—in a large city you can obtain the same help from some competent teacher of speech—and get some private lessons in breathing. One lesson a week for two months or so ought to fix the habit sufficiently so that you

can go on by yourself. And once you have acquired the right habit you need never lose it.

Resonance

Equally important in the production of good tone is proper resonance. It is astonishing how much the tone can be enlarged. Every now and then you meet some man or woman of slight and delicate build the tones of whose voice are large and rich in quality. That person, either by the accident of a lucky youth or through study, has automatic command of resonance.

The Most Important Element.—The process of control which results in such a degree of resonance is little understood or considered by most of us. Virtually nothing is told us of it in school or anywhere else. Yet it is a vitally important step in securing command of the mechanics of communication. It is a question whether the characteristics of the individual's speech that give persuasiveness, that lead others to trust him and follow his advice, do not depend more upon the nature of the resonance of his voice than upon any other one thing. This does not mean in the least that anyone, merely through clever control of resonance, will be able to simulate feelings he does not experience. Like any other trickery, that is hard to carry through so as to escape detection. Far more important is the fact that good control of resonance gives you an instrument which is instantly and fully responsive to every wave of emotional or intellectual suggestion in the message you have to deliver. One that does not *blur* your meaning. One that does not *misrepresent* you. You can develop such resonance. The results you have attained by intelligent study of breathing may encourage you to work at resonance.

Good Resonance and Bad.—Now resonance, of some sort, is present in all voices. In all voices the light and feeble sound-vibrations produced by the vocal cords are magnified in the cavities

of mouth, naso-pharynx and nose, as in a violin box. One might be disposed to question the analogy with a violin box or clarinet tube, on the ground that whereas the violin box is wood, the human vocal tract is only flesh and blood. The analogy is right, however. The walls of mouth, naso-pharynx, and nose are of bone or hard gristle covered very thinly with flesh, and at the moment of speaking or singing the tissues of the vocal tract are stretched tight like a drumhead and become hard—hard as steel, says Dr. Andres of the tissues of an opera singer's vocal tract while singing. You will find interest and instruction in the volume entitled "Caruso's Method of Voice Production," by Dr. Marafioti.¹ The frontispiece of that book gives an instructive *picture* of the course of breath and sound in the throat and mouth. Other books that will be of interest are "The Voice," by an English specialist, Dr. Aikin,² and "Great Singers on the Art of Singing," by J. F. Cooke.³

The difference between a good voice and a poor one—one that is unpleasing or characterless—lies in the *nature* of the resonance which the primary sound-vibrations are made to produce. And that depends on the degree of control of the muscles above the larynx.

The Sort of Tone You Want.—We are apt to describe a good tone, one that pleases the ear—that is to say, one that has good resonance—as vibrating, ringing, deep, mellow, etc. These are all fanciful terms for the quality that is meant. "Your ear knows." Everyone knows the difference between the tone of a brass instrument—a cornet or a trumpet—and that of a violoncello. At its best the quality of the human voice with good resonance is not unlike that of a violoncello. The cello tone is not harsh or noisy; it does not blare like a brass instrument; it is not uneven or spotty. It is soft or loud as may be needed but it is always solid and full.

¹ P. Mario Marafioti, *Caruso's Method of Voice Production*, D. Appleton & Co.

² William A. Aikin, *The Voice*, Longmans, Green & Co.

³ J. F. Cooke, *Great Singers on the Art of Singing*, Presser.

Everyone knows a few persons with voices like this. They may be highly cultivated persons, or they may be stevedores or waiters. Some are gifted by nature with exceptional automatic *control*. But anyone can *develop* the control. We need to wake up to the fact that many voices—perhaps most voices—might have the violoncello quality if people would invest intelligently in them, so as first to get them tuned up and then to keep them in condition.

Listen for a while every day to the voices of the people you meet. You will be surprised to find so few of them that measure up to their possibilities. Some are deep, but harsh; others are smooth, flexible and easy, but feeble; they have no depth or power. These people simply do not know how to utilize the endowment which is theirs by nature.

A Matter of Muscle Coordination.—To attempt here a detailed explanation of resonance would be futile, since resonance is a matter of physical sensation—it would be like trying to describe the taste of a strawberry or the scent of a rose. Stating the matter in very simple terms, however, we may say that resonance involves giving the mouth and vocal centers generally such a *shape* that the tone vibrations set up in the throat will be magnified most fully and harmoniously. A cornet or horn that is properly shaped gives a strong and harmonious tone—if it is dented out of shape the sound produced is dull and feeble. So with the human voice. We need only to “open our mouths rightly” so as to give the inside of mouth, upper throat and nose the right shape for reverberating the tone, and then keep that proper shape while singing or speaking.

A baby has this perfect coordination of the many muscles that play upon and modify the shape of the vocal tract, just as it has perfect command of breathing. The trained singer or speaker after years of effort recovers this easy and automatic command—and we have a Caruso or Melba, an Edith Wynne Matthieson or Coquelin. Here and there you find a fortunate man

or woman—a truck-driver, perhaps, a waiter, a shoe clerk, a nurse-maid—who has never lost this automatic coordination, and the voice of that person has the same qualities of power and charm as the voices of the great artists.

Vigor and Charm.—Anyone who can recover this automatic coordination of muscles, so as to secure maximum resonance, will have a good voice. Every normally made violin, properly tuned, produces beautiful tones. And anyone who will steadily follow the directions of a good instructor can go a long way toward obtaining—or rather recovering—the beautiful voice which he desires and the possibility of which he had in infancy.

Observe, the tone of a cello or violin is not hollow. It has strength, force, life. So with the good human tone. We are prone to misunderstand what is meant by a “mellow” voice—to associate it with a kind of personal slackness, a lack of the snap, masterfulness, “kick,” which we generally feel to be the indispensable attribute of a man of action. Not so. By a good voice with good resonance is meant a voice which has in high degree the suggestions of strength, of command, and with them the cello qualities. It is entirely possible to develop such a voice, if you will go about the matter in a businesslike way.

The Personal Touch of the Instructor.—For this stage of your study, however, you need the personal touch of an instructor or coach. Additional help you may find in such books as “Resonance in Singing and Speaking,” by Thomas Fillebrown.⁴ The muscle adjustments involved in resonance are far more complex than those involved in breathing. It is practically impossible to build them up unaided from a description. On the other hand, they center in a few key muscle actions. If once you master these the whole process comes right and the snarls in your voice apparatus somehow smooth out, even without your realizing. You can learn what is necessary from a teacher, from listening to him and watching him and from the immediate detailed advice he can

⁴ Thomas Fillebrown, *Resonance in Singing and Speaking*, Ditson Co.

give for your particular difficulties. Whether he is able to *explain* the process satisfactorily is of comparatively little importance.

The initial tuning up for resonance may require, as already suggested, perhaps a lesson a week from a good teacher of voice, preferably a teacher of singing—for a year, plus half an hour or so every day for practice of the simple exercises the teacher will assign. Keeping the voice in condition, after that, will require perhaps a minimum of fifteen minutes daily practice for another year or so. By that time, however, the habit of automatic watching of your own voice will have been begun, and it will continue and become more firmly fixed.

Relaxation and Gentle Efforts at First.—The first thing your instructor will do, probably, is to show you how to use the voice very softly and gently without any strain or effort, just humming, perhaps.

With very many persons the tones even of ordinary talk give some suggestion of *strain* or undue tenseness. That is the result of our long fixed bad habits of making tones, habits which constrict certain muscles so as to alter the shape of the vocal tract. But good tones, those which have right resonance, are always made easily. There is no sensation of strained muscles, even when the speaker is animated, excited, indignant. The cello can suggest all the moods yet at the same time always sound easy and full. Proper instruction shows you how to drive the breath over the vocal cords, whether gently or strongly as may be needed for the meaning you wish to convey, without constricting at all the muscles concerned in resonance.

It is a matter of learning first to relax so as to break up the habitual tenseness of some of these muscles, then, by means of very gentle and easy exercises, of gradually accustoming the muscles to work rightly together. Until at last you get automatic coordination and then—like Caruso, or the baby—you can say anything you please loudly or softly, slowly or fast, and be sure of always making tones that are rich in resonance—just as you

always get a full and resonant tone out of a violin or a cello that is in tune.

Applying the Method in Talk.—Now when you have “got the feeling” of a tone that is properly produced, apply the principle in your talk.

It is wise to begin with reading aloud. In reading, as you do not have to think what to say, you can concentrate on the technique of delivery. Take a short passage in a paper or magazine, or one of the extracts in Chapter XXI or Chapter XXVI of this volume—just a sentence or two of prose, or a few lines of verse—and read it off, “placing” the tone with every word. Do not concern yourself, at first, with the meaning; just utter the words one by one as if in a musical exercise, and try to *nurse* the right sensation from word to word. The effect at first may be somewhat like slow chanting. Ten minutes a day, *every* day, will help. Two ten-minute periods daily will be much more useful. Gradually you will find yourself able to put in the meaning. The bits you read will sound less like chanting, and more like talk. In a month or two you will probably be able to read straight along, with fair tone and expression.

After you have some facility in the reading, try placing the tone, now and then, in conversation. Reading aloud bits of conversation from stories or plays will bridge the gap. Then make the first attempts on some occasions when it does not matter, perhaps in telephone talk with a friend. If you succeed, your friend will notice nothing more than that your speech seems very clear. Any strangeness, if at first you are not very successful, may perhaps be attributed to a poor connection. Proper placing of the tone is a distinct help in telephoning and constant use of the telephone often aids in building the habit of good tones.

Before long you will be applying the same method in ordinary conversation, without suggestion of artificiality. The first result of more careful breathing and better resonance will probably be a somewhat slower and more measured rate of speaking. But you

need not stop with this. Keep experimenting and you will be able to talk, if you like, at the same rate as before beginning your study.

Any Voice Can Be Made Pleasing and Effective.—Unless there is some ailment of palate or larynx, and these are exceedingly rare, any voice can be made pleasing and expressive. Harshness, by softening a little, becomes depth and power; shrillness, by easing up, becomes clear incisiveness. Breathiness, by study of breathing and resonance, can be removed. The work of improving your voice will bring certain and large benefit and pleasure. Why should you not recover the voice which once you had?

CHAPTER XXXV

PHYSICAL EXPRESSION

The Earliest of Human Languages.—Our attitude toward the third great feature of “delivery,” the appeal to the eye through look, posture, and movement, is like our attitude toward the voice. It is a thing to which most of us give little conscious thought, yet it is of the highest importance in every form of speech. Moreover, careful attention to it brings large and speedy profit.

All of us are sensitive to the expressiveness of looks and movements. We recognize an acquaintance at a distance by his walk. We like to watch a crowd or a group even if we cannot hear their remarks. Our interest in the “movies” comes largely from our interest in watching the expressions of the performers. Among peoples who lack written language bodily expression has been highly developed, and various forms of pantomime or sign language have been worked out which are used among peoples speaking different tongues. Before present methods of teaching deafmutes to talk and to read lips had become general, a highly developed form of pantomime could be observed on the grounds of any deafmute school, used by pupils and teachers alike in their out-of-class relations. It is interesting to speculate as to what the human race might have done with sign language if men had been congenitally deaf and dumb.

Action Language Today.—In all speech, as truly today as in old times, there is a constant running accompaniment of this expressive bodily action. No word is spoken without some manifestation of feeling, however slight, something which indicates that the speaker is pleased or displeased, angry, doubtful, puzzled,

with respect to the matter he is discussing. Even when telephoning, we smile, frown, and nod our heads, almost as if the person at the other end of the line were in view.

Children's Talk.—In the talk of children and simple and artless persons these physical signs of feeling are vivid and easily observed. Study the process of communication that takes place in a group of small boys—little fellows of ten or eleven, not yet overcome by the desire to be “strong silent men.” Note the movements, the gestures, the facial changes, the unspoken thoughts revealed by eye and mouth, the semi-conscious messages of tone of voice and mere inflection. You will find much to interest you. You will observe how admirably every distinguishable element of action in the case of a small lad, untrammelled by the restraints that come with the years, contributes to the force and accuracy of the message of the moment.

Or it may be that you have among your acquaintances or relatives a little woman of fourteen. The next time you talk to her take special note of the auxiliaries of expression she employs so well. Women as a rule have greater mastery over communication than men. You have learned this, perhaps, in the case of adults. Watch the maiden of fourteen summers!

With Grown-ups Also.—With older persons, who are sophisticated and cautious, the signs are less manifest. But they are always present, if one observes closely. Even when there is conscious effort at suppression of signs of feeling, the ostrich-head attempt is almost always futile. When one speaks with colorlessness and passivity, that very fact excites the listener's suspicion and sets him hunting for the actual feeling underneath. As listeners, we all act upon the basic assumption that a speaker's mental attitude toward what he is saying is bound to show in his manner.

Popular instinct is strong for this view. “When you call me that, smile.” “Watch his hands.” “Couldn't look me in the eye.” “Hearty handshake.” “He took it standing up.” “Hand like a fish.” “Grim, set jaw.” “Poker face.” “Keep a stiff upper

lip." In important dealings we all wish to "see him face to face" as well as "to have it in writing."

Studied by Poets and Novelists.—In all ages poets and novelists have utilized those popular notions as to the language of the body, and have tried to suggest the thought and feeling of their personages by describing points of manner. Examples may be found anywhere in the pages of Chaucer, Shakespeare, Fielding, Dickens, Balzac, Maupassant, Tolstoi—and hundreds of other writers.

And by Those Who Live by Pleasing.—The subject has also been studied in all ages and with the closest attention in a very different quarter, namely by individuals whose living depends upon pleasing the feelings of those with whom they must deal—professional actors and singers, servants, nurses, waiters, beggars—as well as quacks and fakirs of all sorts. In Browning's poem, "Fra Lippo Lippi," the hero, a fifteenth century portrait-painter relates how in his childhood, as a street beggar, he learned to read faces and manner :

But, mind you, when a boy starves in the streets,
Eight years together as my fortune was,
Watching folks' faces to know who'll fling
The bit of half-stripped grape bunch he desires,
And who will curse or kick him for his pains,—
Which gentleman, processional and fine,
Holding a candle to the Sacrament,
Will wink and let him lift a plate and catch
The droppings of the wax to sell again,
Or holla for the Eight and have him whipped,—
How say I?—nay which dog bites, which lets drop
His bone from the heap of offal in the street,—
Why, soul and sense of him grow sharp alike,
He learns the look of things, and none the less
For admonition from the hunger-pinch.

Conscious Technique Neglected.—Now while we all have a sort of intuitive knowledge of this matter of physical expression,

and all instinctively practice it to a degree, we make practically no effort to develop this knowledge into a conscious technique. The feeling of most sensible men is, probably, that attempts to utilize physical expression in a practical way are futile, and in fact unworthy, to be associated either with sentimentalists or with charlatans.

For attempts have been made, repeatedly, at commercial exploitation of the psychology of bodily expression, so far as it was known, in a kind of standardized fortune-telling. In recent years plausible individuals have undertaken to advise young persons as to the line of work they should enter, or to guide business houses in selecting employees, utilizing their shrewdness in "reading" the features of bodily expression. The pseudo-science of these modern fakirs, based on insufficient knowledge and applied far more positively than the facts warranted, has brought fresh discredit upon the whole matter of bodily expression.

The "Language of the Body" a Reality.—Nevertheless, reliable psychologists and hardheaded workers in the field of anthropology who have studied the different races of men scientifically, assure us that the entire body is expressive; every action, look, and sound, every little movement has indeed "a meaning all its own" if we can but observe closely enough. Word-language, these scientists insist, is only a partial translation of thought and feeling into a conventional agreed-upon code of signals, and in interpreting these signals we must always go behind the words and take into account the speaker's manner—just as we do his tone and utterance.

The scientists remind us, also, that in civilized life, just as in the most primitive times, there is a vast proportion of the subject matter of communication which is below the level of definite consciousness, which never ought to be formulated in definite words. As some bygone sage remarked: "Wretched beyond description would be the married pair who should have to cast all their conversation in the form of explicit statements." The phrase

"articulate thought" is in itself significant. To express every delicate shade of feeling in definite words would take a command of word-language which no one, in fact, possesses. And when accomplished the result would be unnatural. A vast proportion of the little things we have to communicate to one another are mere "background stuff," merely to be "washed in," suggested. To put them into plain words would throw out of scale everything else we have to communicate.

Directness of Bodily Language.—A look, a wink, alertness of bearing at one moment, relaxation at another—these trifles carry their message swiftly and potently; they are short-cuts where a regular roadway of words in arranged sentences would give really a wrong meaning. Words challenge conscious scrutiny. Manner and bearing convey just enough of the speaker's feeling or attitude to set the listener's mind working. Note New York "traffic cops" in action, how often the officer lets action speak for him.

Truthfulness.—The psychologists confirm the popular notion that bodily expression, because of this intimacy and delicacy, reveals the speaker's attitudes and feelings more truthfully than do his words. If he is lying, they agree, his manner is pretty sure to be out of keeping with what his words say, and hence rouse suspicion and lead to discovery. If he is not lying, though it is the words that give the direction of his thought, it is the manner which indicates the nature of the feeling that lies behind them and the degree of its intensity. Just because this bodily language is presumed to be unconscious, we normally feel it to be a more truthful index of the speaker's intention than are his words.

Universality.—They remind us also that the language of physical expression is international. People of all races manifest their feelings substantially in the same way. Shylock's words: "Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions?" tell the story. The old notion

of the stolidity of the American Indian has been dissipated by fuller knowledge. Kipling's "East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet" is a half-truth which his own poem overthrows. The movies are international in appeal. The Afghan's notions of a Charlie Chaplin film are no doubt different in detail from those of a resident of Westchester County, but they both pay their money to see his pictures, and they laugh in about the same places.

Practically Instinctive.—Finally, the language of the body, employed by us from infancy—both when we speak and when we listen—is virtually instinctive. Whereas the little child has to master word-language through a process that is at least partially conscious, though later on he forgets that childish effort, our command of bodily language is picked up from infancy onward practically without effort. Uneducated persons and children indeed are very nearly as sensitive and as accurate in their use of this primary language of bodily expression as those who have spent long years in school and college.

Priscilla D, a four-year-old, was left at home one day, with her older sisters, under the care of a colored maid. When Father and Mother returned, the older children made complaint of Priscilla, specifying certain indignities suffered from her lips. Father questioned Priscilla. With the face of a cherub she confounded her accusers by repeating with complete verbal accuracy and in honeyed tones all of the things she had said. Father turned to the colored maid. Out of her wrath came the spirit as well as the letter of truth: "Yas, sir, Mr. D.—. Yas, sir. That's the very word she said—. She said that—. But she said it *dirty!*"

The Way to Improvement—Observation of Others.—On the other hand, of course, careful study enables one to obtain wider and more conscious understanding of the art of expression—as in the case of the professional actor—and more delicate command of its resources for specific purposes. Therefore a man who

desires to obtain full control over communication will do well to study with the utmost care the matter of appeal to the eye. He will use common sense, but, like the salesman, politician, actor, nurse, waiter, he will study the matter as carefully as possible for himself, in its relations to his own situation and needs.

The best approach to the subject is an indirect one, as "catcher" rather than as "pitcher," through watching the manner of other persons. Any direct attempt to alter your own manner, before a good deal of attention has been given to watching other people, is likely to lead only to grotesque mannerisms; the "cure" will be worse than any disease you had before.

Allowing for Defects in Transmission.—The philosophy of bodily expression rests on the maxim that the entire body is expressive; that it all responds to and helps to convey the thought uttered in words. Actually, of course, the case is not so simple as this very brief statement of the theory would imply. The theory as thus stated implies a condition of the body which in fact is not often found among adults in modern civilized society. Our adult bodies are rarely limber and supple enough to be adequate vehicles of expression. The impulses to sympathetic accompaniment of our words may come equally to all of us, but with most of us they are more or less choked and deflected, perhaps by some habitual tension of muscles, some habit of carrying ourselves, which has grown out of our calling, environment or temperament, and which has somehow warped our bodies and made them dull mediums for expression. You can see this if you study a group of adults in the same way as you studied the group of children. You will detect many restraints and inhibitions—for instance, the restraint that goes too far, that is designed to conceal a little element of feeling but so overshoots the mark as to introduce other emotional elements not intended for transmission at the time.

Mannerisms from Early Environment.—There is the influence of early environment. A child that is continually nagged at

by parents or teachers may develop either a cowering manner or one of sullen stolidity that will be carried into the contacts of adult life, stiffening with the years. Habits of rough life in youth—the “corn-row walk” of the old-time prairie boy, for example—sometimes persist long after the man has left his early surroundings.

The Mannerisms of Vocation.—Then there are the habits of carriage and manner that accompany certain callings. When a man gets on his feet to make a speech you can tell whether he is of sedentary occupation by the way he stands and by his gestures. The man who sits all day is uneasy and uncertain on his feet—like the banker who stirred his feet four hundred and twenty-five times in a forty-minute address. Further, he will make gestures as he does when at a desk, with hand and forearm, not with the full arm. The man who is on his feet all day—a salesman, perhaps, an outdoor worker, a factory man—makes a much better appearance on the floor when he stands to deliver a speech. The outdoor man, however, is likely to slump down clumsily and make a spectacle of himself when seated. To the banker the sitting posture is the position of action and authority; to an outdoor man to sit down is to rest bone and muscle.

Routine Occupations.—Positions of purely routine activity or positions where the work is not closely supervised are apt to develop an apathetic manner. Office boys and attendants, ticket-sellers, subordinate salespeople, have often indefinite duties. They ought to be alert and attentive. But their work is apt to seem to them unimportant; people ask them foolish questions until they get tired of answering; and they are not closely supervised. Unless they have unusual ambition they are pretty sure to become careless and apathetic.

Office Workers.—People who handle close and exacting work for hours often become silent and preoccupied. One of the executives in a large Chicago establishment a few years ago was a man

of genuinely interesting and expressive personality, who talked extremely well, when he did talk; but most of the time he went about in a preoccupied way with a face as blank as that of an Egyptian mummy. When you asked him a question it took a moment or two to bring him down to earth.

Executives.—A man in executive work often becomes unduly cautious and restrained in manner because of the presence of responsibility. Furthermore, people have to come to *him*; he is not, as a salesman is, constantly reminded of the need of adapting himself to others, and hence he often gives the impression of lack of interest. Actually of course an executive has special need to be alert; he ought to be a dynamo, keeping other people active. If he appears apathetic or cold he will be always missing opportunities.

What a Portrait Painter Sees.—A well-known portrait painter says that in making his pictures he has come to study closely the lines of his sitters' faces. People of certain occupations have open faces, he says. People of some other occupations have closed faces. Teachers and lecturers, whose work consists in explaining ideas to other people, have faces in which the lines of expression are strongly marked. On the other hand, he says, lawyers and business executives of certain types seem to have cultivated the art of concealing their thoughts, so that their faces are comparatively blank and closed.

Preoccupation.—Add now to these matters of habitual bearing the influence of preoccupation, which in this age of swift and complex living is an insistent trouble in the speech of all of us. When we are preoccupied, the impulse from the specific thought or emotion does not get a fair chance at us. We are dominated in manner, as in choice of ideas and of words, by the habits which generally govern us.

The Happy Medium—Neither Flighty nor Inert.—If you watch closely the manner of the persons who talk to you, in rela-

tion to the words they utter, you will recognize in some persons a degree of expressiveness which is highly effective, although delicate and operating through very subtle suggestions.

With some other persons you will observe that their expressive devices are exaggerated; they show a degree of vehemence which does not properly belong to the thought they are expressing. These persons, you will recognize, are either in some measure insincere, or else they are grown-up children—they have not developed the perspective as regards life and its interests and values which is expected in a normal adult. There was a slang phrase, a few years ago, which applies in this connection, "rubber-neck." It was used of a person who was too eager—who lacked a proper sense of perspective in his personal demeanor. Some men are too responsive. They take up an idea so easily that a stranger is apt to think them either foolish or disingenuous. Some men incessantly nod their heads as they listen. Others smile monotonously.

Still other persons, you will find, are "dumb"—that is to say, their powers of bodily expression are undeveloped. They are living within an abnormally thick shell. Either they have no strong impulse toward communication, or through some more or less morbid inhibitions they have been the victims of self-repression. They go about habitually with absent manner and faces that are preoccupied, either tense or vacant. When they begin to speak, it is apt to be hesitatingly and in a mumbled tone which makes it hard to catch their meaning. Or they speak abruptly and roughly; their remarks come to us as an interruption, and often prompt dislike. A volume recently published on "Pantomime," a translation of a well-known French work by Charles Aubert, will bring to attention many specific points bearing on the matters here discussed.¹

The Fine Art of Listening.—A first result of this sort of study of the people you see every day, and of the "bad habits"

¹ Charles Aubert, *Pantomime*. Henry Holt & Co.

and the mannerisms which are common among them, will be to enable you to listen more intelligently and sympathetically. You can discover better the actual feelings and intentions of people with whom you must deal, in spite of certain misleading suggestions of their physical mannerisms. Such study is, of course, not closely scientific, but it is extremely useful if you do not push it too far. Eventually it will carry over into your own communication. The sensitiveness which it develops tends to make you aware of similar peculiarities in your own manner.

Cultivating Responsiveness.—But this alone is not enough. Many a keen and accurate critic is constantly guilty, unaware, of faults he sees so clearly in others. You need constructive work upon your own case.

For one thing, why not train yourself, in conversation, always to manifest your response to what your companion is saying? Pay attention to him. Don't look away, don't permit yourself to play with your hands or with the articles on the table, or to draw pictures meanwhile. We all think "We can listen just as well"—and perhaps we can. But if we seem to the other person to be inattentive, he does not like to talk to us. Of course, there are occasions when we wish to produce an impression of casualness, of *not* listening closely. Drawing pictures may help at such a time. But don't do it thoughtlessly. It might be interesting to watch your own actions for a day, to see whether you indulge in any such mannerisms.

Proper Responsiveness.—Look at your companion. Do not stare at him, of course, but follow closely the expression of his face. And indicate by your own expression your agreement, doubt, or disagreement as his talk proceeds. You are almost certain to hold his attention, whoever he is, if your own face is expressive while listening.

Now to do this, you need to cultivate sensitiveness of the facial muscles. A child, as we have noted, talks all over—his face shows every change in his thought. He gets attention more readily

than an adult because his eager face attracts and interests. Adults are apt to have impassive and stony faces in ordinary talk. The reason, generally, is this: The muscles around the eyes and mouth are extremely responsive to our feelings and moods. One who is talking to us expects some play in these muscles in response to what he says. But with most of us, by the time we reach mature life, concentration on our special business has set these muscles into some fixed and tense position. They do not respond easily to the stimulus and suggestions of talk. Hence the stony face. Sometimes at night, as you are going to sleep, you will notice the gradual relaxing of these tiny muscles round the eyes and mouth, that perhaps have not relaxed throughout the whole day.

Now most remarks in conversation, both our own remarks and those addressed to us by others, consist of no more than two or three sentences at a time. If our face muscles are even a little tense, they fail to register the swift play of meaning and emotion in the talk. That is one reason why the expression on our faces is often inappropriate to the ideas we are uttering at the moment. Too much of the time, besides, we are soliloquizing, not considering the other man at all or trying to make our ideas interesting to him, and for this reason also the face remains set. The other man's attention is not "flagged." Instead he may be repelled.

Have You a "Stony Face"?—If you want to test the response of a companion to your own facial expression, look away from him and speak with quiet features, with eyes fixed on vacancy. In most cases you will find that the other man presently will look away too. Very soon he is likely to show uneasiness, and find some pretext for ending the conversation.

Years ago at a certain college one of the instructors was a big, awkward, diffident man. He was a man of great ability and he knew his subject, but he could not bear to face a class. When he addressed a student, he was apt to look in the opposite direction, often out of the window. Naturally, students did not make

much of a record in that class. Most of them were bothered or worried by his apparent impassivity; he made them nervous. Now in later life, it turned out, this man got into a line of activity in connection with his college duties where he was compelled to meet people, all kinds, and take care of them. He was forced to come out of his shell of shyness. Today his manner is altogether different. He has taken a prominent part in the life of a big city and has become a national figure in his profession. Yet he came near failure through lack of control of his bodily expressive powers.

The Dangers of Impassiveness.—Some persons deliberately cultivate an impassive manner as a means of disconcerting the people they have to meet in business interviews. That is undoubtedly a good device for breaking the attack of an unwelcome salesman. But it is suicidal for yourself. In the first place, you do not get the best of what the other man has to give; you send him away feeling uncomfortable and resentful. Moreover, if you do too much of this sort of thing you tend to stiffen and hamper your own powers of expression. Whoever wins in that game, you lose, in the long run.

An impassive mask is no real protection. When you really get excited you lose entire control of the muscles of expression. A certain purchasing agent had one of these impassive countenances and talked usually in a manner almost void of expression. He had cultivated this rigid self-control because he had naturally a violent temper and was afraid of letting go. Every now and then, however, his temper got the best of him and then his control vanished; he talked furiously; his face worked so that you might think him out of his mind. People who knew his weakness used to play upon it and irritate him in one way or another until he "blew up." Then he revealed in his excited talk far more than he would have done if he had not attempted the unnatural rigidity.

True control is flexible control which varies with the circumstances. By paying attention to your listener and remembering

to show your response you will gradually get rid of the "cigar-store-Indian face." On the other hand, you will not let yourself become a "rubber-neck."

Quiet Alertness.—Good talk requires composure, an appearance and manner that suggests competence, adequacy, strength. The quiet manner of most highly successful executives, of the skilful physicians who have to handle nervous people, comes from the intelligent control of their muscles, not only of the face but of the entire body.

In the first place, do not slouch. Most of us do that nearly all the time. We do not stand erect. We stand on one foot, with bent knees, with hands in our pockets or on the hips. When we walk, we sway, or roll, or swagger. When seated, we relax too much, and sprawl back in our chairs. When we have to make a little speech to a group we are apt to lean on the furniture in attitudes that appear to our hearers grotesque and comical. In the second place, do not fidget. Most of us do that also. There are few people who have not the habit of stroking the face, moving the feet, playing with watchchain or keys, tipping their chairs when seated, moving articles on the desk as they talk.

Many an American visiting Europe has remarked upon the way men and women in European society are able to stand on their feet, erect and easy, through a long reception or party. General army training may have contributed to this power as regards the men, but it is mainly owing to general care for bodily control and poise as a part of good manners.

The Value of Poise.—The worst thing about the mannerisms of slouching or fidgeting is that they are most marked when we are most interested in our subject. They make the listener feel that we lack full control of *ourselves*, so that he is less likely to follow our lead. Worse than that, they make us ridiculous. The body, whether we realize the fact or not, is a picture, a statue. When we talk, we are all the time the "illustrations" of our own story. If our appearance is unseemly, the listener is constantly

receiving an unpleasant impression of us and therefore of our message. His eyes take in the ridiculous picture though he may not always realize what is wrong. It is often the case that men who are really intelligent and worth listening to, are so nervous and uncouth in their movements that they provoke laughter whenever they become earnest. A man who wants to give a good impression will not go about unshaven, with shabby clothes, rusty shoes, or soiled or broken collar. But many of us destroy the effect of good clothes when we begin to talk.

On the other hand, if the body is rightly poised that fact contributes definitely to the listeners' interest and pleasure. John L. Sullivan, long after he had retired from the ring, used to go about the country in a vaudeville act. He gave a talk and then a brief sparring exhibition. He was at that time an old man and almost corpulent in figure, but he was as light on his feet and as graceful in movement as a Russian dancer. In his boxing costume you would never have thought of him as a heavy man.

Acquiring Control of Your Muscles.—The nervous man, who has the tendency to fidget, usually has the capacity of really effective talk. Nervousness of body is evidence of power of expression which is now running to waste. What such a man needs is to learn to keep still, to suppress needless movements. Control of body implies control of thought and will.

What is to be done? Well, it will help a good deal merely to think about the matter, as often as you can. If you can make yourself remember while talking to stand erect, without stiffness, and when seated not to slouch, you will be started on the right road. It will help, also, if you will remember to keep yourself in good condition. Allow yourself plenty of time for sleep. Before an important interview relax; take a few moments' rest. Don't go into it fagged out or excited from another interview.

The sales manager of a large company said lately, "When I have an important conference at hand, it makes a difference how I feel. If I am tired, worried, all in, I make a bad impression.

I try to get a good night's sleep or a brisk walk or a half-hour's rest beforehand."

The Indispensable "Daily Dozen."—If you are in earnest about making the most of your communication resources, it is absolutely essential to keep your body tuned up, through exercises which restore to it vigor, suppleness, poise. Something like the army setting-up exercises or the "daily dozen" is indispensable. The first work they require of the student of acting is to limber up his body through all manner of physical exercises, not in order to be able to "do stunts," but in order that every ordinary movement he makes may have lightness and grace "to spare." The same sort of training is important for any man who desires to improve his speech for the needs of ordinary life. He is in greater need of it indeed, than even the actor. Because the actor has always the support emotionally, of the play, the part, the costume and make-up, the lights and scenery to keep him responsive to the impulses to expressive look and pose. But the man in business or professional life is incessantly under the influence of his occupational environment and of the habits which it imposes. At every point in an important negotiation, or when he has to face a group, large or small, and make a little speech, he needs a reliable technique of muscular control.

The Habit of Good Posture.—It is important to form the habit of good posture at all times, whether walking, standing or sitting. It is not hard to hold yourself erect while exercising, but when standing still, in conversation or before an audience, we are all apt to relax. The soldier develops his trim bearing in a few weeks because they keep after him all day long. Can you not do the same for yourself?

When standing, one useful suggestion is to grip the ground slightly with the toes at all times. Most of us fail to do this and that throws out our entire position. To test your posture rise on the toes, stay there a moment and drop the heels slowly, keeping your weight on the toes. It is worth while to keep that attitude

of erectness whenever you are on your feet, even when by yourself and when not talking. That is just as true as regards posture while sitting. It is worth while to have the habit of sitting up straight, without slouching, even when alone. If you pet yourself while alone, you are pretty sure to do the same when "under fire," no matter how important the occasion. But if you can control yourself when alone, you will have control automatically when you need it in public.

Experimenting with Expression.—You may do even more in the matter of physical expression if you will put your mind on it. Ideas, we may remember, are conveyed largely by suggestion; not by detail "spelling out" of a message but by a flash, a picture. We flash an idea across and then "spell it out" in words to verify it. Why not utilize this power of bodily suggestion more fully and more constructively when you talk? We think sometimes that the power of dramatic expression of feeling is a peculiar gift of the actor. The fact is merely that the actor is a person who has specially cultivated a power which all possess. What we approve in him is the fact that he represents feeling in the way we know other people express it. When we are excited, we ourselves express the same feeling, perhaps more vividly than the actor on the stage.²

Some Specific Hints.—Try to catch yourself sometime and see just what you do when excited. After some lively interview go off alone in front of a mirror and repeat as nearly as you can just what you said and just what the other man said. Then you can see what you do, and what you look like, when excited.

Notice the facial expression you used in making a particular statement. Repeat the phrase with the same look and see how the lines of the face shape themselves as you say it. You can analyze that pose and expression and move your face into it de-

² Some of the books on the technique of acting will give many suggestions, with respect both to standards and to methods, that may be utilized off the boards. The following, in particular, will repay examination: Louis Calvert, *Problems of the Actor*, Henry Holt & Co.; Arthur Hornblow, *Training for the Stage*, Lippincott.

liberately. Actors do that as a matter of course when studying a part.

Try the same thing with conversations which are not exciting, which are quiet. The opportunity for constructive use of the power of expression is perhaps greatest of all in such quiet talk. If you have trained your powers of expression you can convey the suggestion you wish by a single look.

Not Artificiality, but a Free Channel for Your Meaning.—

You may object that all this will make you artificial. That is not the fact—it is only utilizing your normal powers. Actually you may be insincere now, in so far as you are trying to convey thought and feeling by an imperfect medium, over an imperfect “line.” The right thing is to study yourself, study the way you talk when at your best. Then you will learn gradually to apply this knowledge in a constructive way at all times.

There is an additional reason for acquiring control of muscles of face and body. Distinct speech and clear and agreeable tone, we have seen, are largely matters of coordinating various muscles and nerves. The muscles which are concerned are intimately related to those used in dramatic expression, particularly those of the face. By getting control of the muscles which govern the dramatic expression of face and body, you make it far easier to speak your words distinctly and well, and to use your voice to the best advantage.

How Marshal Foch Talked.—No man of our age has qualified more distinctly as a man of action—not a “talker” merely—than Marshal Foch. In the following account, from the *Manchester Guardian*, of his speech in London just after the war, one of the significant points is his command and use of the power of dramatic suggestion:

Marshal Foch spoke very simply, very colloquially, very much a soldier talking to his friends. He stood chest out, head well back, with

one leg well forward, suggesting the elastic posture of a fencer as he moved slightly and regularly at the knee as though about to lunge.

His main point was that he had done nothing. "The Boches attack. I said I would stop them. When they were stopped I attacked them. Well, everyone did what he could, and after some time we were all attacking along the 400 miles of front—the French, the English, the Americans, the Belgians, and we all went for them." At that point the Marshal raised both his hands and pushed forward and downward with his hands and body in one movement.

"Victory," he said, "is an inclined plane. We pushed them, all of us, and they simply had to retreat and retreat." He continued to make the slightly downward movement with his hands, moving elastically at the knee in unison. "And after that we simply kept pushing and pushing, and they went back, and we were simply on the point of getting——" he waved his hands.

"Then they asked for an armistice. They accepted all our conditions"—shoulders, hands, and eyebrows went up. "Well ——!"

The impression everyone got was of the great shock it had been to the Marshal when the enemy surrendered.

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